

OBAMA'S MR. WRIGHT ■ SISTER SOLDIER ■ BENEDICT'S AMERICAN DREAM

APRIL 7, 2008

# The American Conservative

# Crash Landing

Nicholas von Hoffman ■ Wilson Burman



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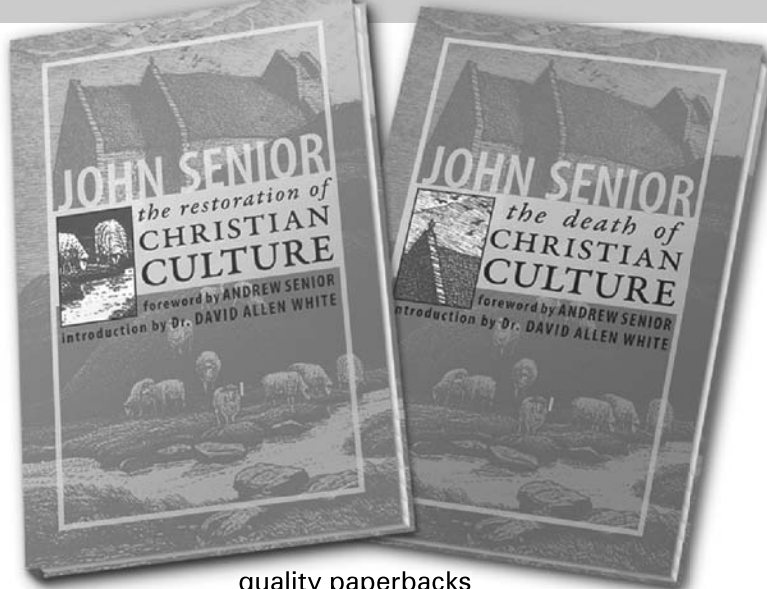
# The American Conservative

## Crash Landing

Nicholas von Hoffman ■ Wilson Burman



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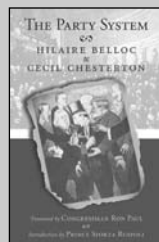
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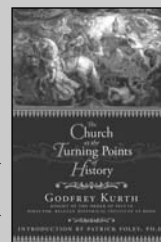


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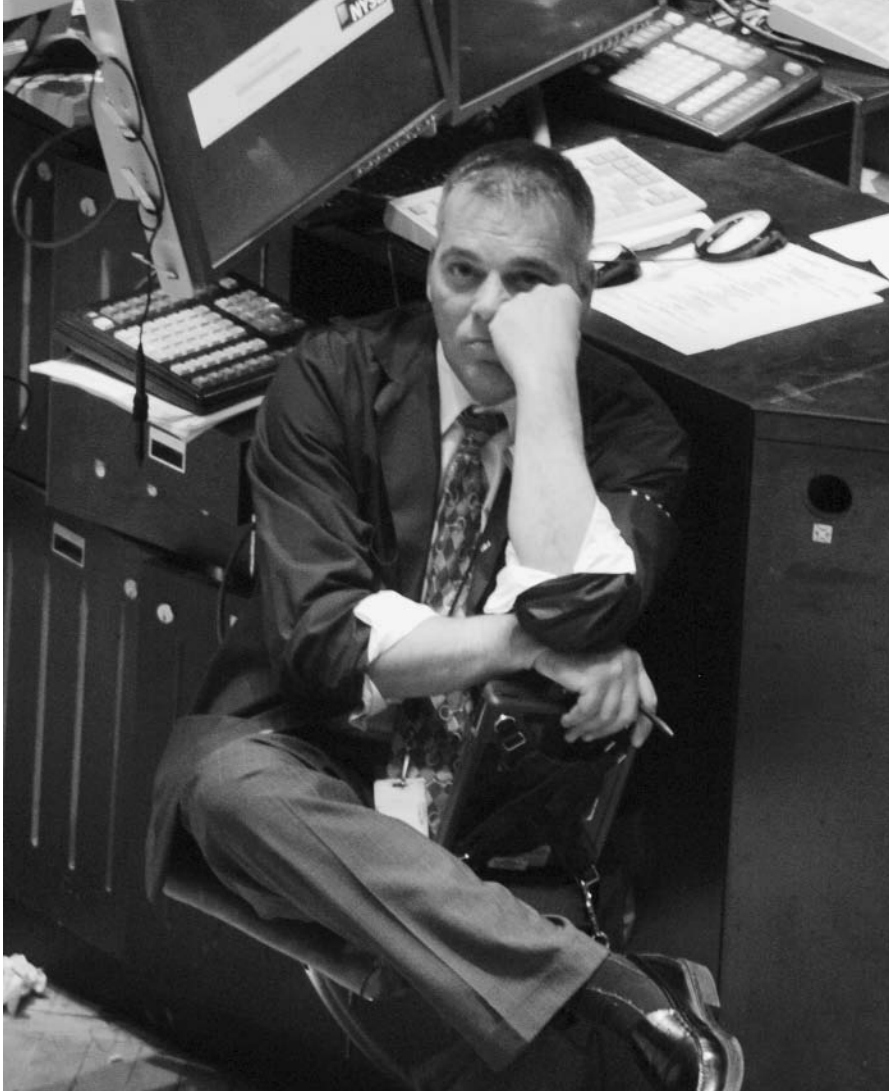
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[WAR]

## OLDER, NOT WISER

The Pentagon sought to make the 4,000th American death in Iraq a non-event, marking the milestone with an ambivalent truism: "Each soldier, Marine, sailor or airmen is equally precious, and each loss of life is equally tragic." Asked by ABC for his thoughts, Vice President Dick Cheney was matter of fact: "Sometimes you have to commit military force, and when you do, there are casualties." He acknowledged a "special burden" on military families, but reserved high honors for his boss: "The president carries the biggest burden, obviously. He's the one who has to make the decision to commit young Americans."

Making that commitment means anticipating the cost—something George W. Bush failed spectacularly to do. Since he declared the "end of major combat operations" on May 1, 2003, an additional 3,861 American soldiers have lost their lives. Some 28,790 more have been wounded. Over 150,000 Iraqi civilians have been killed; 4 million have fled their homes. And Congress has shelled out an additional \$473 billion. All since "Mission Accomplished."

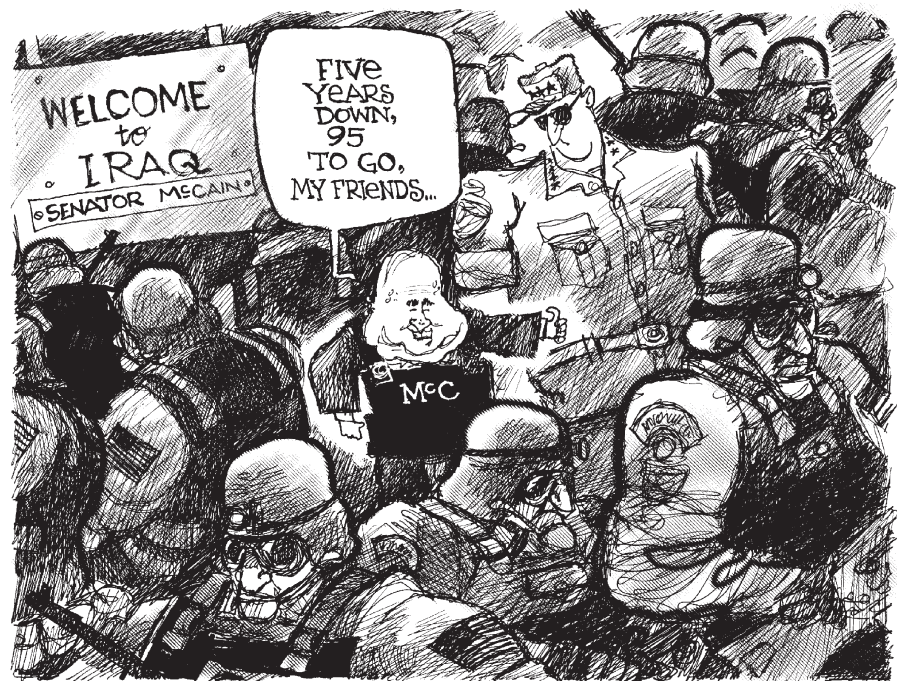
Not that Bush feels overburdened. He told a military audience assembled to mark the anniversary of the invasion, "Because we acted, the world is better, and United States of America is safer. ... The battle in Iraq is noble, it is necessary, and it is just." Five years in, he has mastered the script. Democracy. Victory. "I have no doubt..."

For our happy warrior, secure in his delusion, 4,000 is just another number among many he chooses to ignore.

[STRATEGY]

## FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL

"The military objectives of the surge are in large measure being met," Gen. David Petraeus said last September. The Bush administration, buoyed by his assess-



CHRIS MADDEN

ment, regained some of its foreign-policy swagger. The escalation—then at its peak, with 168,000 soldiers in Iraq—was a success. Casualty figures were down, and insurgents were being thumped. Doubters were "defeatists." Our troops would soon be coming home.

Fast forward six months, however, and the surge seems stuck on pause. On Petraeus's advice, President Bush has declined to announce further troop reductions in 2008. Five brigades will be pulled out in July as planned, but the much anticipated drawdown stops there. The decision to make a major withdrawal will probably be left to the next commander in chief.

Meanwhile, events in Iraq suggest that the massive troop increase has done little to secure the country's long-term stability. Heavy fighting has broken out in Basra and Baghdad. But the surge is working, Team Bush insists. You can't lose if you don't quit.

[ALLIES]

## EXECUTIVE ORDERS

Much of the endless primary campaign has consisted of manufactured byplay around gaffes by candidates and their surrogates. Clinton ally Geraldine Ferraro said something arguably true about Barack Obama—that he wouldn't be where he is if he weren't black. His camp feigned shock and outrage, and Geraldine was dumped over the side. Ditto when Obama staffer Samantha

Power called Hillary a "monster." Oh the pain! Predictably, Samantha was given her walking papers. Jeremiah Wright obviously merits his own special category in this competition.

But one of the most genuinely disturbing surrogate remarks has not received much attention. Several weeks ago, at a United Jewish Communities conference, Obama's representative Dan Kurtzer sensibly remarked that Obama would listen to a "plurality" of Israeli views, not just those of the right-wing Likud. Clinton senior adviser Ann Lewis retorted, "The role of the president of the United States is to support the decisions made by the people of Israel. It is not to pick and choose among political parties."

This is breathtaking. According to Lewis—and presumably according to Hillary—the role of the American president is to back whatever the Israeli government wants. If Israel seeks, as some right-wing Israelis now advocate, to "solve" the Palestinian problem by ethnic cleansing, the "role" of our chief executive is to "support the decision." The American president should consider himself a vassal of Israel's parliament.

Yet remarkable as this claim was, it is more alarming that, apart from a few blogs, no one criticized Lewis for it—no one from Obama's campaign, no one from McCain's. It's as if they, too, found the presidential job description to be exactly as Ann Lewis described.

[ELECTION]

## THE WEAKEST LINK

John McCain recently made a major gaffe of his own, but being a neocon means never having to say you're sorry—or wrong. At a March 18 press conference in Jordan meant to show off his foreign-policy smarts, the senator proved he cannot tell Sunnis from Shi'ites. "Well, it's common knowledge and has been reported in the media," he said, "that al-Qaeda is going back into Iran and is receiving training and are coming back into Iraq from Iran." Joe Lieberman, traveling with Bush's heir presumptive, corrected him: Shi'ite Iranians are no friends of Sunni al-Qaeda.

McCain was unexpectedly contrite: "I'm sorry; the Iranians are training the extremists, not al-Qaeda. No al-Qaeda. I'm sorry." But days later, his national security spokesman, Randy Scheunemann, retracted the senator's retraction: "There is ample documentation that Iran has provided many different forms of support to Sunni extremists, including al-Qaeda," he assured the *New York Sun*. "It would require a willing suspension of disbelief to deny Iran supports al-Qaeda in Iraq."

We've heard that before: the same specious argument adopted to "prove" a nonexistent link between Saddam and al-Qaeda. Islamofacists everywhere—even the secular ones like Saddam, even the Wahhabi Sunnis and Shi'ite fundamentalists who have been slaughtering one another for some 1,300 years—are working together, and the only thing to do is "bomb bomb bomb, bomb bomb Iran."

[CULTURE]

## SLAVES TO FASHION

A colorblind society may be an impossible dream. The biggest obstacle isn't racism but the class of professional anti-racists, whose latest occasion for

grievance is the cover of *Vogue*. Basketball superstar LeBron James became the first black man (and third man of any race) to be featured on the cover. Annie Liebovitz's photo features him dribbling a basketball with one hand and holding supermodel Giselle Bündchen with the other, while putting on his "game face."

The minor achievement was a footnote in initial news reports. But controversy soon followed. University of Maryland professor Damian Thomas told the AP that the image "reinforce[s] the criminalization of black men." A magazine analyst said the image screams, "King Kong." And John Hoberman, a University of Texas professor, told ESPN that the photo fits into "the 19th-century themes of the savage versus the civilized." Columnist Jemele Hill reminded readers that Hoberman has "studied the images of black athletes for years."

It's not just fashion magazines. Even political ads apparently encode racial messages—discernible only through the most subtle analysis. Orlando Patterson, a Harvard professor of sociology, examined Hillary Clinton's "red phone ad," which asked voters who had the experience to answer a emergency call in the night. Patterson explained the source of his special insight: "I have spent my life studying the pictures and symbols of racism and slavery." He continued, "When I saw the Clinton ad's central image—innocent sleeping children and a mother in the middle of the night at risk of mortal danger. ... I couldn't help but think of D.W. Griffith's 'Birth of a Nation.'"

Only someone preoccupied with race can look at a basketball player and see a primitive caricature or view white children sleeping and decode a pro-KKK message. Thankfully, the public is less concentrated on color and more progressive than the race-baiters crying foul. ■

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[depression medicine]

# Red State

Forget campaign promises. The next president will face a stack of unpaid bills.

**By Nicholas von Hoffman**

IMAGINE THREE well-dressed people on a sidewalk: a white-haired man in his early 70s, a woman in a pantsuit with the tails of her jacket splitting over a protuberant behind, and a young, spaghetti-thin African-American man. They are absorbed in a dispute, but they carry on in polite, moderated tones.

Across the street, a building is collapsing, another one is on fire, a woman is jumping from the roof of a third structure. Others kneel, gasping for air near inert human forms, more dead than alive. The police, hands clapped to their heads, run to and fro like ants after a squirt of insecticide.

Firefighters arrive, jump out of their glistening red machines, and attach their hoses to the hydrants. But no water comes out.

Not so many feet away, the three continue their disagreement, oblivious to the tumult.

Thus the presidential campaign soldiers on, all but ignoring the largest economic upheaval since the disaster of 1929. Given the chaotic state of no-longer-so-high finance in America, they have good reason to stay as far away from the daily debacle flooding out of Wall Street and, inch by foot, putting the nation under water.

But whoever wins the White House will enter it under conditions undreamt of when this long presidential season began. Long-held delusional assumptions have ceased to be tenable, owing to the catastrophic brew mixed up by Wall Street.

On day one of his administration, to borrow a phrase from Hillary, John McCain would have to make some agonizing reappraisals of his war policies. His website proclaims, "More troops are necessary to clear and hold insurgent strongholds; to provide security for rebuilding local institutions and economies; to halt sectarian violence in Baghdad and disarm Sunni and Shia militias; to dismantle al Qaeda; to train the Iraqi Army; and to embed American personnel in Iraqi police units. Accomplishing each of these goals will require more troops and is a crucial prerequisite for needed economic and political development in the country." He does not discuss how he is going to pay for the first installment on his vow to camp in Iraq for a century if need be. The United States has been borrowing the funds needed to carry on the war, but those days are over.

Owing to the ever shrinking dollar bill, foreigners are ceasing to buy U.S. government securities. Last year they bought \$126 billion less than in 2006. Every war before this was paid for, at least in part, by raising taxes. This time we lowered them and borrowed the money. Although there have been times in McCain's career when he recognized the necessity of raising taxes, of late he has been a hard-line member of the school that believes tax cuts are good for whatever ails. A big thwack at the capital-gains tax rate will cure cancer.

For their part, the two Democrats vying for their party's nomination have

left the impression that some of their programmatic ambitions will be paid for by money saved by ending the Iraq War. They would do well to recognize that there is no money to be saved. The best that can be hoped for would be less money borrowed, which will not go far toward paying for things like the "affordable, high-quality child care" Obama's website says he will "provide ... to ease the burden on working families." They may be able to do that kind of thing in Sweden, where they tax the bejabbers out of the citizenry and where, much more to the point, the krona is as rock solid as our greenback is not.

If one of the Democratic contenders is elected, he or she will be hampered by financial constraints while withdrawing from the Iraq conflict. The endgame they envision would take months, or more probably years, and all that time the meter will be clicking.

Both parties have acknowledged that large sums are needed to repair a rusted-out highway system, and the Democrats have been promising a hatful of new or expanded government programs that are extraordinarily costly because they are labor-intensive in fields such as education and health. How they are to be paid for is another matter. Hillary maintains that much of the cost of her health proposals would be met by preventive medicine keeping people from falling sick, an assertion for which there is no evidence.

Raising taxes in today's precarious business environment may only make a



bad situation worse. The money will have to be borrowed or printed or both. Not a particularly good idea. Printing money, a modern form of debasing the coin of the realm, causes inflation, a subject none of the candidates is dwelling on but which they may have to talk about as the cost of everything continues its climb. Ben Bernanke has been pumping hundreds of billions into the collapsed veins of the financial system to keep the great banks and investment houses from dying.

The situation the incoming president will find him or herself in is not the same as the one that confronted Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal. He was able to deficit-spend to his heart's content without causing inflation because there was so much unused capacity in the country. Factories were idle and fields were fallow, so printing money stimulated production rather than driving up prices.

In some previous panics, recessions, and depressions, bankruptcies cleared the field for growth and recovery. After bankruptcy, the company may have folded, the farm may have been foreclosed on, the house taken by the bank, but people at least emerged debt-free, able to begin again. Today the policies being followed are different. Republicans and Democrats both, perhaps without quite realizing it, seem to have agreed that both big financial institutions and homeowners will be kept half alive somehow but left with heavy, paralyzing debt.

Debt taken on to buy new equipment, to develop products and technologies, or for a home is productive, enabling debt. But that is not the kind of debt we have saddled ourselves with. This is unproductive debt, much of which was contracted at the Wall Street version of the roulette wheel. Hundreds of billions of dollars were borrowed and risked on the basis that houses would be worth more next year than last because that's what real estate did. It just went up in value by

some alchemical process unavailable to any other segment of the economy.

Secure in this truth, bankers, brokers, and others seeking to make fortunes without rendering useful services told themselves and repeated to the world that, in the whole history of the United States, real-estate prices had never gone down and had always gone up. Aside from the fact that no reliable data exists for such an exuberant claim, people knew it could not be so. In a free market, prices go up and prices go down. They just do.

On this never-down-always-up hypothesis, mortgages were issued by the hundreds of billions and turned into bonds, which were turned into more bonds and used for insanely complicated side bets until a gigantic cobweb debt skyscraper, mounting into the trillions, was erected and now threatens to topple. Nobody fathoms how the thing was put together or how it can be dismantled, but there it stands, endangering whatever hopes and projects an incoming administration may have.

For the time being, the government's response is to try to spend our way out of the crisis. The economic stimulus package will cost \$168 billion, which we might borrow from Japan or Germany or the Arabs or anybody—please, help! While our elected officials stand on street corners passing out money, the Federal Reserve is spending more propping up the financial institutions, but come next January, the new administration is going to have to choose between continuing to spend and risking destructive inflation or cutting off expenditures and risking a destructive crash.

The new president may also find that America is not quite the world's sole superpower anymore. Though it is a fixed conviction that the U.S. has gained its special status because of the might of its arms, others know better than to think American power derives from its bathtub toys.

They know that the primary basis of the nation's strength has always been its economy. They saw the hollow military power of the Soviet Union and understood that communism's rotting economic base could not sustain its rockets, its submarines, and its other advanced weaponry.

Moreover, the Soviet ruble was no match for the dollar, the world's reserve currency, the money of international trade, the most sought after and reliable currency. The dollar has been literally as good as gold, which is why foreign governments and individuals have bought so many hundreds of billions worth of U.S. government and non-government notes and bonds.

Dollar power has enabled the United States to dominate the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization, and to have a significant influence on the internal economic and social arrangements of scores of nations. It has made it possible for the American military to secure lodgments around the globe.

A dominant economy has made enabled the U.S. to intervene and guide the world's financial systems and, when America has chosen to do so, cut off and starve states with whom it has inimical relations. Neither Germany nor Japan nor China, three large and wealthy nations, would be taken seriously if one of them were to threaten economic sanctions against a weaker, obstreperous state, but when the United States does, men in distant capitals buckle. At least they used to.

But the dollar isn't the dollar anymore. It does not hold its value as it once did, and it is, month by month, year by year, losing its allure. Thanks to a persistent low-grade inflationary policy and trillions in American debt, ministers of finance, currency traders, and businessmen of all stripes are beginning to turn away from the greenback in favor of the euro or other currencies. The longer this

trend continues, the less the range of choices the incoming president will have in the conduct of foreign affairs.

As for ameliorating the international trade agreements many Americans believe have been detrimental, forget about it. In straight power terms, America, now the world's largest debtor nation, cannot raise tariffs to bar creditor nations' merchandise. A person does not order around those to whom he owes money and from whom he is borrowing more.

Far from obtaining concessions from America's creditors and bond holders, the new president will have to worry about what was once an impossibility—that foreign creditors and investors, scared by the diminishing dollar and the inability or refusal of the American government to take remedial steps, will head for the exits or, worse, panic and stampede to get out of dollars and into euros, pounds, yen, and yuans.

On a smaller scale, this is exactly what happened to Bear Stearns. Should such a series of events unfold nationally, Americans will suffer huge inflation, evaporation of savings, bankruptcy, unemployment, and the kind of social strain from which much ugliness and even regime change have been known to flow in other nations that have tripped into this kind of abyss.

None of that need be. There is a way out, but it is not a happy-go-lucky one. The next president will have to tell the nation to man up. The remedy the new White House occupant cannot help but announce is the castor oil of austerity, an indefinite postponement of much that millions want. That's what you do when there is no money and you are in debt. Americans have faced worse in their history. They can do it again. ■

*Nicholas von Hoffman is a former columnist for the Washington Post and Point-Counterpoint commentator for CBS's "60 Minutes."*

[brother, can you spare a billion?]

# Papering Over the Problem

Killing the dollar to save Bear Stearns

By Wilson Burman

AS THE NEWS BROKE on March 14 that the Federal Reserve would backstop the rescue of Bear Stearns by JPMorgan Chase, it's unlikely that many of the drivers paying record-high prices at the gas stations off the West Side Highway thought to glance toward midtown, where two sleek towers housed the beneficiaries of the Fed's largesse. But those unhappy drivers, along with every other taxpayer and consumer in the U.S., had just become partners in a deal that offers considerably greater risk than reward.

Headlines notwithstanding, this was not a "bailout" in the most widely understood sense of the word. Bear Stearns lasted barely a full trading day between the Fed's action and the announcement of the acquisition by JPMorgan at \$2 (later raised to \$10) a share. Essentially it was a government intervention. To keep Bear Stearns temporarily afloat, the Federal Reserve extended credit through JPMorgan and agreed to bear the risk of loss on Bear's collateral to the tune of \$29 billion. The move stirred memories of Long Term Capital, the 1998 hedge-fund bailout that the Fed organized but did not fund, or the Resolution Trust Corporation, the government's massive publicly financed response to the Savings and Loan crisis. On the continuum of expediency, the Bear Stearns episode falls somewhere between the two.

There were some understandable reasons for the Fed to go through JPMorgan instead of lending to Bear directly. As a practical matter, Morgan is a commercial bank, so it has access to the Fed's discount window. Also, because of the established relationship between the two firms, Morgan could quickly evaluate Bear's collateral for the loan. But there was another reason. The Fed realized that a direct, overt bailout of a hugely profitable Wall Street firm wasn't feasible politically, particularly in an election year and during a recession. A latter-day RTC wouldn't fly right now. But that doesn't mean the situation lacks serious consequences. By dipping into the public till to help a medium-sized Wall Street firm that's not part of the commercial banking system, the Fed implicitly pledged at least partial assistance to a whole raft of firms higher up the food chain. Of course, the unstated but understood guarantee of the government-sponsored enterprises like Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and the 12 Federal Home Loan Banks has always existed. But now, because the government deemed Bear Stearns worthy of a backstop worth tens of billions, taxpayers stand behind firms like Goldman Sachs, Merrill Lynch, Lehman Brothers, and Morgan Stanley as well.

That is the deal the Federal Reserve has made on behalf of the public. It's the



latest chapter in the socialization of risk and its corollary, moral hazard. Anyone who works long enough on Wall Street knows, at least subconsciously, that this is the way things work: if the going gets tough, a small coterie of unelected and mostly unaccountable officials in Washington will probably decide that your employer is too important to fail. In an effort to keep that from happening, wages, savings, fixed-income streams, and Social Security checks will be inflated away to "ensure the stability of the financial system." Creative destruction is the mantra until things threaten to get creative in the Hamptons.

Just because the Fed understood the implicit obstacles to funding a classic, sustaining bailout of Bear Stearns doesn't mean the temptation wasn't there. The media almost always misses an important reality: monetary policy can effect a *de facto* bailout, particularly for Wall Street, almost as easily as a direct hand-out. In the weeks leading up to the Bear Stearns debacle, the Fed wasn't bashful at the levers of policy. One such lever is temporary open-market operations, which the Fed uses on a daily basis to target short-term interest rates. When the Fed adds reserves to the banking system, the salutary effects of the associated liquidity spill over into other instruments, including stocks and commodities. In early February, the value of this temporary liquidity pool was \$15 billion. As stress increased in the financial markets, the Fed boosted that to a high of \$77 billion on March 12—just as trading-desk rumors about a possible bank failure peaked and two days before the intervention to support Bear Stearns.

The Fed was busy in other ways. That same week, on March 11, it announced formation of the Term Securities Lending Facility, to accept lower-quality collateral from primary dealers, of which Bear Stearns was one. This was just one new program whereby the Fed takes

**Israel is the only country in the world that has a policy of "directed assassinations" of its enemies and U.S. Director of National Intelligence Mike McConnell is apparently prepared to go along with Tel Aviv's efforts to conceal that activity.**

Israel has denied that it was behind the assassination of Hezbollah Deputy Secretary General Imad Mughniyeh in Damascus on Feb. 12, a claim supported by McConnell, who suggested the death was probably the result of internal conflicts within Hezbollah. But the CIA investigation of the bombing has revealed that the Israelis carried out the killing using Palestinian refugees they had recruited. The assassination quickly became an open secret in Tel Aviv, with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert congratulating the head of Mossad. And the Syrian government may have been complicit, allowing the operation to proceed because Mughniyeh was becoming an embarrassment. After attending a diplomatic reception at the Iranian Embassy, he had been returning to his parked car when another vehicle behind his exploded, killing him instantly. The use of remote-controlled explosives is well within the capabilities of every intelligence service in the Middle East, but the set-up for the operation raises a number of questions. Mughniyeh normally traveled with a Syrian government-provided armed bodyguard. The guard was absent that night. Also, foreign embassies in Damascus have police details outside, making it impossible to park the bomb vehicle without it first being inspected and cleared. Mughniyeh had been implicated by the CIA in the deaths of several Agency personnel in Lebanon and also Chief of Station William Buckley, but he was thought to be semi-retired and had more or less fallen off our screen—but not Israel's.



**It appears to be no coincidence that President Bush, Sen. John McCain, Gen. David Petraeus, and Vice President Dick Cheney have all again been denouncing Iran.**

President Bush's declaration that Iran wants "a nuclear weapon to destroy people" was later qualified by a spokesman insisting that Bush was only "speaking in shorthand," but Iran-bashing is once more officially in season. Some intelligence officers opposed to an Iranian adventure are nervous that something is afoot, reportedly because the White House has asked for some "new initiatives" against the mullahs. Sources in the White House are saying that the security card will be played heavily in the lead up to the November elections.



**An unidentified U.S. Navy nuclear submarine stationed in the Red Sea has joined the fight against international terrorism.**

On March 3, three Tomahawk cruise missiles were launched against a target in the Somali town of Doble, which straddles the border with Kenya. According to local mayor Ali Hussein, three civilians were wounded, a house damaged, and three cows and a donkey killed. The target of the attack, Saleh Ali Saleh Nabhan, a Kenyan who was allegedly involved in attacks on Israeli tourists in Mombasa, Kenya in 2002, was not present. Nabhan is not even an identified terrorist. He is only on the FBI list for questioning in connection with the Mombasa attacks. Tomahawk cruise missiles cost \$1.5 million each.

*Philip Giraldi is a former CIA officer and fellow at the American Conservative Defense Alliance.*

bad decisions off the books of Wall Street firms by accepting riskier paper for longer periods of time.

So Washington went all out trying to buttress Wall Street and particularly Bear Stearns. But there were consequences. On Feb. 6, with the Fed's liquidity pool at that restrained level of \$15 billion, oil traded at \$87 a barrel. On March 12, responding to the Fed's extraordinary measures, it closed over \$109. Gold, in its role as monetary watchdog, was active as well. During the first week in February, it traded at \$887 an ounce. A few days after the Fed's liquidity efforts peaked, it was well over \$1,000. The dollar recoiled in horror at the Fed's onslaught. The dollar index, a measure of the dollar's value against a basket of major currencies, plunged from \$77 on Feb. 7 to \$71 on the day of the Bear Stearns news, tracking the Fed's work almost perfectly and anticipating further interest-rate cuts. The digits on those gas pumps off the West Side Highway flickered by faster and faster.

The overarching goal of those cuts, which began last year, has been to steepen the yield curve, which plots the yield on Treasury debt from maturities of three months to 30 years. Banks are more profitable with a steeper curve because they borrow short and lend long and pocket the difference. The Fed's strategy has shown incipient signs of working. On March 18, just a few days after the Bear Stearns news, both Goldman Sachs and Lehman Brothers announced better than expected earnings. Their stocks gained by 16 and 46 percent respectively. The next day, Morgan Stanley also surprised on the upside, and its stock rose by 36 percent over the next three days. Visa's initial public offering on March 19 was a huge success, with the stock jumping 28 percent on its first day.

But what about the public? So far, the results haven't been as promising. Former Fed governor Lyle Gramley said, "In all past recessions, I was always quite sure

that if the Fed stomped hard on the gas pedal, the economy would turn around and start to grow. But they've now stomped hard on the gas, and credit is not more available, it's less available." It's not hard to understand the sour mood. In a March CNN/Opinion Research poll, 91 percent of respondents said they were somewhat or very concerned about the rising rate of inflation. That exceeded the proportion of people worried about jobs, the stock market, or falling home values. They aren't delusional. In late February, the government reported that wholesale prices over the previous 12 months posted their sharpest rise since 1981.

Ludwig von Mises once wrote, "No emergency can justify a return to inflation. Inflation can provide neither the weapons a nation needs to defend its independence nor the capital goods required for any project. It does not cure unsatisfactory conditions. It merely helps the rulers whose policies brought about the catastrophe to exculpate themselves." Yet the universe of "emergencies" has been expanding to include elections, natural downturns in the business cycle, inconvenient stock market weakness, and bad decisions by Wall Street firms—with predictable results.

Inflation's defining characteristic is expediency. It obviates sacrifice and postpones pain. That makes it a natural complement to many political ventures, particularly unpopular wars. As early as 1965, Lyndon Johnson's economic advisers worried about rising inflationary pressures. As Johnson resisted calls for new taxes, the deficit for fiscal 1967 came in at \$9.8 billion. By the time Congress and the White House finally agreed on a tax increase in 1968, after years of escalation in Vietnam, the deficit was \$25.2 billion and inflation was rampant.

Of course, it would get far worse over the next decade. Even as the seeds of inflation planted in the mid-1960s grew, Richard Nixon put pressure on Fed Chair-

man Arthur Burns to goose the economy for the 1972 election. That dynamic continued and worsened during the 1970s. By the early 1980s, Ronald Reagan was dealing with the consequences of decisions made by Johnson and Nixon over a decade earlier. Part of Reagan's legacy is the latitude he gave Paul Volcker, as risky and painful as that was, to deal with those problems. Unless one believes the next president will want to take the hit for Bush's decisions, or that someone with Reagan's mandate and courage is about to appear, whoever is in the White House a decade from now will probably confront the economic fallout from current policies. But by that time will anyone remember how it all started? How many cursed LBJ or Nixon in 1979? The White House not only knows the answer, it's counting on the nation's forgetfulness.

Federal Reserve officials, safe in the arcana of their craft, might not have to depend on the public's short memory. The opaque nature of monetary policy could do the trick. For this article, I asked customers at a gas station in New York City one question: "What's the main reason for the high price of gas?" Five blamed either Bush or Cheney. Four blamed oil companies. Three said they did not know. Three claimed price gouging by gas stations. Two said, "Everything is going up." Two cited "inflation," with one mentioning the dollar. Two pointed to the campaign in Iraq. One said, "We're running out of oil." One blamed "big cars." One blamed "the Arabs." One apparently upscale customer driving a late-model car blamed "too much money being printed right now." When pressed further, he named Alan Greenspan.

For Ben Bernanke and the current Fed, so far it looks like mission accomplished. ■

*Wilson Burman is the pen name for the New York City investment professional who writes The Cunning Realist blog.*



# Bush's Black List

ON READING George W. Bush's discourse to the New York Economic Club last week, Cicero's insight came to mind: "To be ignorant of what occurred before you were born is to remain always a child."

With the Iraq War entering its sixth year, the dollar sinking to peso levels, the economy careening into recession, and 12 to 20 million illegal aliens roosting here, Bush alerted us to what really worries him: "I'm troubled by isolationism and protectionism ... [and] another 'ism,' and that's nativism. And that's what happened throughout our history. And probably the most grim reminder of what can happen to America during periods of isolationism and protectionism is what happened in the late—in the '30s, when we had this America First policy and Smoot-Hawley. And look where it got us."

Let us try to sort out this dog's breakfast. First, America was never isolationist. From its birth, the Republic was a great trading nation with ties to the world. True, in 1935, 1936, and 1937, a Democratic Congress passed and FDR signed neutrality acts to keep us out of the Italo-Abyssinian and Spanish Civil wars. And FDR did say, "We are not isolationist except insofar as we seek to isolate ourselves completely from war." But how did staying out of Abyssinia and Spain hurt America?

As for Smoot-Hawley, it was a tariff enacted in June 1930, nine months after the Crash of 1929, which occurred, as Milton Friedman won a Nobel Prize for proving, when the stock-market bubble, caused by the Fed's easy-money policy, burst. Smoot-Hawley had nothing to do with a Depression that began in 1929 and lasted through FDR's first two terms. This is a liberal myth, probably

taught to Mr. Bush by New Deal Democrats at the Milton Academy.

America First was an organization of 800,000 anti-interventionists formed at Yale in 1940 by patriots like Gerald Ford, Potter Stewart, and Sargent Shriver, backed by John F. Kennedy, to check FDR's drive to war. Herbert Hoover supported it, and its greatest spokesman was the Lone Eagle, Charles Lindbergh.

But America First did not make policy. FDR did. And it was FDR who, by cutting off Japan's oil in July 1941, rebuffing Prince Konoye's offer to meet him in the Pacific or Alaska, and issuing a virtual ultimatum on Nov. 26, 1941 to get out of China, propelled Japan to its fatal decision to attack Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7.

Isolationist is an epithet used to smear those patriots who adhere to George Washington's admonition to stay out of foreign wars, Thomas Jefferson's counsel to seek "peace, commerce and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none," and John Quincy Adams's declaration that America "goes not abroad, in search of monsters to destroy." Does Bush regard these statesmen as blinkered isolationists?

Protectionism is the structuring of trade policy to protect the national sovereignty, ensure economic self-reliance, and "prosper America first." It was the policy of the Republican Party from Abraham Lincoln to Calvin Coolidge. America began that era in 1860 with one half of Britain's production and ended it producing more than all of Europe put together. Is this a record to be ashamed of?

Compare protectionism's success to Bush's record. Since 2001, he has presided over the seven largest trade deficits in history, the loss of 3.5 million manufacturing jobs and the collapse of the dollar, and added but one-fifth of the

private sector jobs Bill Clinton created. Gold has gone from \$260 an ounce to \$1,000, oil from \$28 a barrel to \$100.

"Nativism" is another smear term, dating to the early 1850s and the Know-Nothing Party, which sought to halt immigration after millions of Irish flooded in following the famine of 1845. It carries a connotation of xenophobia, the fear and hatred of foreigners.

Thus does Bush tar critics who deplore his dereliction of duty in failing to defend this nation's borders against a Third World invasion that may turn this Republic into a Tower of Babel.

From 1924 to 1965, there was indeed little immigration. Does that make Coolidge, Hoover, FDR, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, and Kennedy knuckle-dragging nativists? When JFK took office, we were as united and strong a country as we have ever been. How did we suffer from not having 12 to 20 million illegal aliens here?

In smearing as nativists, protectionists, and isolationists those who wish to stop the invasion, halt the export of factories and jobs to Asia, and stop the unnecessary wars, Bush is attacking the last true conservatives in his party. Which is understandable. For after the judges and tax cuts, what is there about Bush that is conservative? His foreign policy is Wilsonian. His trade policy is pure FDR. His spending is LBJ all the way. His amnesty for illegals is Teddy Kennedy's policy.

Two-thirds of the nation says we are on the wrong course. Two-thirds rejects NAFTA and amnesty. Two-thirds wants out of Iraq. Two-thirds rejects Bush. Bush says that people are being misled by those wicked old isolationists, protectionists, and nativists. At least he and Poppy will have something to agree on in retirement. ■

# Obama's Mr. Wright

He ain't heavy, he's my brother.

By Steve Sailer

MILLIONS OF WORDS have been devoted to Barack Obama and his “post-racial” and “post-partisan” presidential campaign. As a candidate whose policy platform is almost identical to Hillary Clinton's, Senator Obama has been running largely on the charisma generated by widespread assumptions about the political implications of his personal background.

An avid golfer (16 handicap), Obama brilliantly positioned himself in his 2004 Democratic Convention keynote address as the Tiger Woods of politics, the product of a loving marriage bridging the racial gap, thus suggesting he's suited by nature and nurture to, in the words of countless journalists, “transcend race” and “heal our racial and political divides.”

Remarkably, not until most of the primaries were over did almost anybody in America notice that the candidate's most personal relationships suggest the opposite of his artfully concocted campaign image.

Obama's famous persona began to show cracks in late February when his often peeved wife Michelle, an intensely ungrateful beneficiary of affirmative action by Whitney Young H.S., Princeton, Harvard Law School, and the Sidley Austin corporate law firm, was recorded saying her husband's triumphs meant “... for the first time in my adult life, I am proud of my country.”

The serious blow, however, came with March 13 telecasts on ABC and Fox News of sermons by Obama's spiritual adviser, Rev. Dr. Jeremiah A. Wright Jr., who fulminated in front of a raucously enthusiastic congregation, “No, no, no, not God bless America—God damn America.”

In response to the belated controversy, the candidate first claimed ignorance, even though Wright's history of Left radicalism goes back beyond his 1984 trip with Louis Farrakhan to Libya to meet Muammar Khaddafi.

The failure to publicize this side of Obama marks one of the most egregious failures by the press and public in recent political history. How could it have happened?

That Barack Obama is black offers the country a potential advantage: it makes his intellectual sophistication and verbal adeptness more acceptable to the bulk of voters, many of whom found Al Gore and his 1330 SAT score too inhumanly cerebral to trust. If Obama, a superb prose stylist, were white, he'd be written off as an effete intellectual. But white voters are hungry for a well-educated role model for blacks. And blacks see the preppie from paradise's membership in Wright's Trinity United Church of Christ as evidence that he's keepin' it real.

That Wright was a radical leftist and that Obama shared much of his outlook was apparent to anyone willing to read closely the potential president's graceful but slippery 1995 autobiography, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. As I explained in my March 26, 2007 article “Obama's Identity Crisis” in *The American Conservative*:

Even [Obama's] celebrated acceptance of Christianity in his mid-20s turns out to be an affirmation of African-American emotional separatism. As I was reading *Dreams*, I assumed that his ending would be

adapted from the favorite book of his youth, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which climaxes with Malcolm's visit to Mecca and heart-warming conversion from the racism of the Black Muslims to the universalism of orthodox Islam. I expected that Obama would analogously forgive whites and ask forgiveness for his own racial antagonism as he accepts Jesus.

Instead, Obama falls under the spell of a leftist black nationalist preacher, Jeremiah A. Wright, who preaches African-American unity through antipathy toward whites.

My article was denounced as racist in the *Washington Monthly* and by David Brock's George Soros-funded Media Matters. Yet my conclusion identified the crucial question about this gifted politician that still remains unanswered:

He possesses one of the finest minds of any politician, but his personal passions routinely war against his acknowledging unwelcome truths, even to himself. Whether his head or heart would prove stronger in the White House remains unknown, perhaps even to Barack Obama.

As *Dreams* explains to anyone willing to endure Obama's mellifluous but evasive prose, his parents' disastrous bigamous marriage psychologically scarred him. He idealized his almost completely missing Kenyan father, while resenting his white American mother who twice dumped him on his grandparents in Hawaii.



To counter the impressions of Obama as either a secret Muslim (preposterous) or an opportunistic agnostic (plausible), the Obama campaign has long trumpeted his ties to Reverend Wright. Indeed, Obama's tearful hearing of Wright's sermon "The Audacity of Hope" (Obama borrowed the title for his second bestseller), in which Wright denounces how "white folks' greed runs a world in need," provides the climax for the central section of Obama's first memoir.

Obama, who met scores of black ministers during his years as a Saul Alinsky-style "community organizer," chose Wright as his mentor because he peddled the anti-American and anti-white paranoia that the white-raised Ivy Leaguer associated with being "black enough." For example, here is an excerpt from Trinity's current website explaining its "Black Value System":

*Disavowal of the Pursuit of 'Middle-classness.'* Classic methodology on control of captives teaches that captors must be able to identify the 'talented tenth' of those subjugated, especially those who show promise of providing the kind of leadership that might threaten the captor's control.

Those so identified are separated from the rest of the people by:

1. Killing them off directly, and/or fostering a social system that encourages them to kill off one another.

I hope Obama has matured out of the identity politics obsessions of his thirties. Yet hard evidence for this is sketchy. We have detailed breakdowns of the Obama family's charitable deductions from their tax returns of 1998, 2005, and 2006. In both 1998 and 2006, Trinity was their favorite charity, with the Obamas donating \$22,500 in 2006

alone. So, Obama pays to promulgate the idea that white America is killing off the "talented tenth" of young blacks.

On March 18, rather than holding a news conference in which he might finally be exposed to tough questions, he orated edifyingly about how America's racial problem is so complex, so deep-rooted, so multifaceted that the only possible solution is to elect him president. Few noticed that, yes, he implicitly admitted that he had lied about what he knew and when he knew it. And, no, he wasn't going to find himself and his children a less leftist and racist church.

Revealingly, Obama asserted, "I can no more disown him than I can my white grandmother ... who once confessed her fear of black men who passed by her on the street ..."

Yet pages 88-91 of *Dreams* reveal both a serious factual conflict and why Obama carefully picked out Trinity, whose "black liberation theology" Wright described in 2007 as similar to the "liberation theology" espoused by Nicaraguan Sandinista revolutionaries.

In reality, Obama's now 85-year-old grandmother, the most level-headed member of his otherwise irresponsible family, became afraid to take the bus to her bank management job after being abused by a pushy panhandler: "He was very aggressive, Barry. Very aggressive. I gave him a dollar and he kept asking. If the bus hadn't come, I think he might have hit me over the head."

The self-absorbed Obama's response was to be overwhelmed by angst and revulsion—not at the potential mugger but at his own grandmother after his leftist grandfather revealed that he didn't want to give his own wife a ride to work because, "You know why she's so scared this time. I'll tell you why. Before you came in, she told me the fella was *black*. ... And I just don't think that's right."

Obama reeled in self-pity:

The words were like a fist in my stomach. ... And yet I knew that men who might easily have been my brothers would still inspire [my grandparents'] rawest fear. ... The earth shook under my feet, ready to crack open at any moment. I stopped, trying to steady myself, and knew for the first time that I was utterly alone.

Sadly, with the primaries almost over, the press has done little to illuminate the central conundrum about Obama. Who most influences him? His moderate University of Chicago colleagues or his racially outraged minister and wife?

Why were these publicly available facts ignored until ridiculously late?

First, there's Obama's sheer political talent. If Hillary is the original Terminator 101 of candidates, a cyborg relentlessly plodding onward, Obama is the quicksilver Terminator 1000 from "Terminator 2," a shape-shifting quantum leap in political skill, able to persuade voters that he is whomever they want him to be.

Second, very few journalists have finished Obama's 1995 book. It's too long, too literary, too fixated upon race, the forbidden topic, and too hard to quote. Obama was at Harvard Law School when HLS graduate David Souter breezed on to the Supreme Court as a stealth nominee who, in sharp contrast to the rejected Robert Bork, lacked a controversial paper trail. The budding politician may have learned from this not to put anything in writing that can provide a controversial soundbite.

Third, despite all the calls to "begin a dialogue on race," nobody with a career to preserve has any such intention. Just last October, for example, America's most prominent living man of science, James Watson, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, attempted to begin a dialogue on race concerning the far-reaching implications of rapidly improv-

ing genetic research techniques. He was immediately shown the door.

Similarly, in January, when Richard Cohen of the *Washington Post* became the first journalist to mention that back on Nov. 2, 2007, Wright had given his “Lifetime Achievement” award to Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, Cohen was widely denounced.

Thus the Clintons, who were attacked by Obama supporters as racists merely for using the term “fairy tale,” were terrified of being accused once again of “playing the race card” if they brought up Wright.

Fourth, many journalists assume that they can only report on issues brought up by the candidates. So if Hillary ignored Obama’s racist connections, then, in this Heisenbergian media climate, they effectively didn’t exist.

Fifth, Obama has largely avoided interviews by skeptical experts.

Considering the competition, Obama may be the best candidate of the three remaining. His puerile racial and political views may have matured after his soul-crushing rejection by the black electorate in his 2000 Democratic primary challenge to Congressman Bobby Rush, an ex-Black Panther. Perhaps Obama realized then that his future lay in appealing to white voters.

But we can’t know unless he honestly answers informed questions. What America needs now is for Obama to sit down to a long, live, no-holds-barred interview with someone who has the racial background to ignore political correctness. The obvious candidate is the conservative literary critic Shelby Steele, author of *A Bound Man* about Obama, who also has a black father and white mother.

Is that too much to ask of the man who would be president? ■

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*Steve Sailer is TAC's film critic and VDARE.com's Monday morning columnist.*

## Women at War

The strain of Iraq forced the shock integration of women into the military. The results aren’t all pretty.

**By Kelley Beaucar Vlahos**

A HIGH POINT of Kayla Williams’s service as a noncommissioned Army officer in Iraq was receiving a commendation for her support on missions in Baghdad. Low points included getting molested by one of her own men and being asked to mock a naked Iraqi prisoner in an interrogation cage in Mosul.

Riding a line between woman and warrior, “bitch” and “slut,” Williams, 31, was not alone. The Bush administration’s “long war” has forced the military to shock integrate more than 180,000 women into Iraq and Afghanistan over the last six years. The consequences have been both impressive and ugly and do little to put to rest decades of debate over women in combat.

Critics say the rush to put women into combat-related roles for which they weren’t trained has made them more vulnerable, exacerbated male-female tensions in theater, and advanced a controversial policy while most of the country wasn’t looking.

“We have large numbers of women who have been willing to come into the Armed Forces, who are willing to do jobs for which we have a shortage of young men,” says one retired Army colonel, now in the private sector, who declined to be identified because of his ties to the defense community. “I think the women under these circumstances do the best they can.”

Veterans who have spoken to *TAC* say most female soldiers have exceeded expectations. But the experience of the largest contingent of female soldiers in

modern history is not unclouded. The rate of single motherhood among women on active duty is 14 percent, and nursing mothers are being deployed four months after giving birth. Reports of sexual assault are climbing, as are suicides and the number of women—now over 36,000—who have visited VA hospitals since leaving the service. As of February, 102 female soldiers had died in Iraq.

Meanwhile, the Army, which represents most women in theater, won’t release figures on how many are evacuated from the field due to noncombat injuries, illness, or pregnancy.

“Whatever they are able to conceal or cover that’s not attractive—whether it’s unplanned pregnancy, rapes, whatever—everyone is prepared to pretend what is happening really isn’t,” says the retired colonel.

The drive to integrate women into every crevice of the military—the “ungendered vision” advocated by Duke law professor Madeleine Morris, a former assistant to Clinton administration Army Secretary Togo West—has created turmoil in Washington since the 1970s. And since then the number of women in the Armed Forces has increased dramatically, from 7,000 in Vietnam (mostly medical personnel) to over 40,000 in the Persian Gulf War to one in seven of our troops in Iraq today.

Thanks to Clinton-era liberals—like former Rep. Pat Schroeder and women-in-combat pioneers like Army Assistant Secretary Sara Lister, who was forced to resign in 1997 after she called the Marines



“extremists”—new roles opened to women in the 1990s. Formerly all-male military academies and basic training programs turned co-ed. Today, tens of thousands of women are flying combat aircraft and serving as military police, gunners operating MK19 grenade launchers, interrogators, and prison guards.

Officially, women have not yet ventured into combat, held back by critics who argue that putting them into armored cavalry squadrons or rifle platoons will threaten unit cohesion, weaken standards, and increase injuries, hurting overall force strength. But advocates of full integration insist that women can hold their own on men's terms. Making them “legitimate” will help transform military culture and bolster unit cohesion.

These arguments are academic, for women are in combat today. While the Bush administration initially appeared less interested in integration than its predecessor, the decision to invade Iraq in 2003, the miscalculation of the subsequent insurgency and civil war, and the desire to wage a global terror war have made it impossible for the all-volunteer force to function without women in combat roles. Reality has taken over.

But if this and future administrations want to continue waging protracted asymmetrical wars with multiple fronts, wars in which everyone—not just combat troops and Marines—has to be on point, the negative consequences of shock integration will have to be acknowledged and addressed.

“In 2004, 2005, and probably in 2006, commanders were jockeying for resources,” says retired Col. Janice Karpinski. “There was this increase of women in a variety of positions they’ve never been in. They did very well. They were wounded, they had their limbs blown off, shot into the sky. They needed to be there, if [only] for their numbers. If we removed every female, you would have to have had a backwards draft.”

Young men home from war are pragmatic about the women who served alongside them. They don’t hesitate to tell of their bravery—the female Chinook pilot, for example, who flew night missions under fire to rescue teams in the mountains of Afghanistan—but they are blunt about the stories that rarely make headlines: sexual mischief, the pretty specialist who left one day and never came back, the rumors of rape never confirmed.

Jason Hartley, who served as an infantry sergeant in Iraq from 2004 to 2005, says the way the military dealt with the new atmosphere created by integration was much like the execution of the war policy overall: confused, inconsistent, reactionary. “Everything gets f---ed up and broken. Then you step back and study it,” says Hartley, who published *Just Another Soldier: A Year on the Ground in Iraq* when he returned from the war.

Studying the consequences of shock integration can be slippery. Grim anecdotes are abundant—but so too are tales of transcendence. There is a lack of hard data, as it is impossible to measure the number of illicit romances, the impact on a team when an affair turns sour, the lack of response when a woman asks for help, the women who are afraid to ask, the alcohol-fueled encounters, the sexual harassment, the male resentment toward female commanding officers.

“We’ve had six years to study this, but as far as I know, nobody is,” says Kingsley Browne, a law professor at Wayne State University. Browne has written a book, *Co-Ed Combat: New Evidence That Women Shouldn’t Fight the Nation’s Wars*, which pieces together interviews with soldiers and what little information has slipped into the public domain. “The military has consistently glossed over problems and denied them, denied access to information that could reveal problems,” he says. “To a large

extent it is in nobody’s larger interest to reveal that information.”

Media coverage has been spotty and safe, though most women in the military prefer to be left alone with their M-16s and cigarettes rather than become subjects of iconic—or worse, pitying—stories about their sex. Television, where most people get their 30 seconds of war news a day, has avoided all but the most superficial discussions about women in combat and has reduced the narrative to three stories: those of Jessica Lynch, Lynndie England, and Janice Karpinski, whose sunken eyes betray a 30-year career that ended in disgrace. She characterizes her experience as losing ten rounds with the glass ceiling.

Lynch became, for a shining moment, the face of Operation Iraqi Freedom. She was also the military’s first and last awkward attempt to spin the women-in-combat story for public consumption. A petite blond teenager from a military family, Lynch was severely injured when her supply truck was ambushed by Iraqi fighters on March 23, 2003. Her best friend, Lori Piestewa, a single mother who left two toddlers behind, died from her injuries that day, the first woman killed in the war.

Yet the administration preferred a live hero to a dead one, and Piestewa became a sidebar while Lynch and her West Virginia family were used as patriotic props. Soon after her rescue by U.S. Special Forces, almost every angle of Lynch’s daring resistance and rescue was disputed, even by Lynch herself, who testified before Congress last year that the government had engaged in mythmaking at her expense.

By the time photos surfaced showing Lynch cavorting topless with her fellow soldiers on base, she had been all used up.

The next time a female soldier penetrated the American consciousness she was holding a leash attached to an Iraqi detainee. Elfin and eerily detached,

Lynndie England, 21, was pregnant by fellow reservist Charles Graner, the alleged mastermind of their military police company's notorious sex parties and the grotesque menagerie of photos that led to scandal in 2004. England and several other soldiers were shown abusing detainees at Abu Ghraib prison, posing them naked in pyramids, giving them infamous "thumbs up" alongside their corpses.

Graner, who allegedly manipulated England into staging all sorts of sex photos before and during their deployment, is still in jail. England is on parole, facing a future-crushing dishonorable discharge. She remains a curious example of women who attempted to fit in and went dangerously astray: in a 2006 interview with *Marie Claire*, the lifelong animal lover recalled how she and her fellow soldiers found humor in toying with animal carcasses in the desert.

Karpinski, who was in charge of Abu Ghraib along with 14 other detention centers, was a brigadier general, the highest-ranking woman in Iraq when the scandal broke. "Not one of my units were trained to perform prison operations in a combat zone," she says, "None of them." She recalled one male commander's attitude: "Women made their own bed, let them lie in it."

Maintaining that the mistreatment of prisoners was sanctioned from the top, Karpinski says she was made a scapegoat, partly because she is a woman. She was demoted a year later. "They made me a pox on our history," says Karpinski, now an Army antagonist.

She notes that partisans in the old integration debate have been oddly quiet. "Where is the National Organization for Women? Where is Hillary Clinton? Where is Nancy Pelosi?" she asks, adding that the women who encouraged other women to "be all that you can be" are now abandoning them to the wolves. "When we have women who come back

bruised mentally and physically and have nowhere to go, it's too late to say, 'We should have.' It needs to be done now. Not ten years from now."

Women have different ways of dealing with the pressures of the pack and of battle stress, and the massive forward operating bases in Iraq have become Petri dishes teeming with strange sexual dynamics and juvenile diversions.

"You got these women in huge, walled garrisons that are getting mortared all the time," says former Sgt. Rick Scavetta, 34, who served in both Iraq and Afghanistan before leaving the military in 2006, "not to mention you have large numbers of men, who aren't bad guys, not immoral or indecent, but you put men who've been in combat for a year in this small container and shake it up with IED blasts and mortar blasts and it makes for a unique environment."

Another former Army sergeant who served in Afghanistan reports a similar scene. "You have a bunch of males on the base and a small female population. Then you get downtime. Then things start to happen. It's just like high school. Then you have females who ruin the reputation of the other females. It can be very debilitating."

Hartley describes a situation in which his quick reaction force was called up and found to be three men short. It was surmised that the missing soldiers were "hanging out with a chick who had a room right next to the staging area." "We left," he continued, "sans three dudes, including our 50-cal. gunner. It was bad."

In the 2005 scandal at Camp Bucca, sergeants were accused of lending their rooms for sex parties and arranging mud-wrestling contests involving topless female prison guards.

Thanks in part to the behavior of a minority, says Bethany Kibler, 27, a non-commissioned officer in the Army reserves who spent a year in Iraq, women must fight doubly hard against

shopworn stereotypes like the idea that they wield their sexuality to win special treatment or get pregnant to avoid service. This leads to "a sort of female hate." To overcome this, most women in the military act tough and tend to be judgmental of each other, she says. Many women feel compelled to keep up with the men, to act like their sisters. But in such permissive, stressful circumstances, that armor is easily breached.

Kayla Williams, who wrote proudly about her Iraq experience in *Love My Rifle More than You: Young and Female in the U.S. Army*, says that between the six- and eight-month mark of her 2003 deployment, "there was a general breakdown in military bearing and professionalism" among her team in the field. Fellow soldiers started flipping out, others got their kicks from telling rape jokes. Williams didn't care much when she was called a "bitch" in a heated moment, but she lost it when a fellow soldier tried to force her hand onto his penis in the dark. She reported the incident, and he was transferred. But the damage was lasting.

"I felt somehow betrayed," she admits and, conversely, "like I had somehow led ... to this situation." She worried that because she had tried to be a pal, she may have sent the wrong signals. She eventually succumbed to being "the bitch" rather than "the slut," the dichotomy women say is the male code. "It was difficult and lonely," Williams says.

Sexual assault reports across the Armed Forces increased from 1,700 in 2004 to 2,947 in 2006, then dipped to 2,688 in 2007, according to the Sexual Assault Prevention and Reporting Office at the Pentagon. In the Central Command region, which includes Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait, there were 206 reports in 2006 and 174 in 2007.

Anita Sanchez of the Miles Foundation, a nonprofit that has an arrangement with the Pentagon to provide

immediate care to rape and assault victims in theater and also serves veterans stateside, says the government's official data seems "a bit low" in her experience.

"[The incidents] are going up significantly," she says, and not all are being reported because women still avoid coming forward. They expect the male leadership to close ranks around the accused, or they fear getting transferred or, worse, branded. She charges that "there are ongoing reservations about the DoD's ability to collect, maintain, and analyze the data."

One former sergeant, who served in Iraq in a public-affairs unit before leaving the military, says it is in the Army's best interest to "cover up" the ugliness. "They just don't want to admit it's a hostile environment against women," he says. Army officials flatly deny such charges.

Barbie and Matt Heavrin aren't sure. They were told their 21-year-old daughter was killed crossing the street on base in Iraq on April 4, 2006. They found out later, as the *Washington Post* recently reported, that their daughter, Pfc. Hannah Gunterman McKinney, a young mother herself, was killed when she fell out of a Humvee driven by Sgt. Damon Shell, who accidentally ran her over and left her mangled body in the road. The two had been drinking and having sex earlier that evening.

Elaine Donnelly of the Center for Military Readiness doesn't buy the idea that poor leadership and training and inconsistent boundaries are to blame for today's problems. She insists the troubles stem from throwing men and women so close together in the first place. She would start rehabilitating the situation by insisting that the Army stop illegally collocating women in support brigades with all-male combat units in the field—a practice Army officials deny is even happening.

"We have to figure out what is the best way, the most constructive way, to have a

co-ed military," says Donnelly. "To the greatest extent possible you have to acknowledge that sexuality does matter."

"Women have done very well," she adds, "But it's very disturbing that the signs of trouble and problems have not been given objective review. Our Congress has turned its back. The Pentagon has made excuses."

Men and women home from the war acknowledge that there are many questions from the old co-ed combat debate still unresolved, despite years of experimentation.

Williams, who has traded her rifle for a graduate program at American University, warns against knee-jerk reactions either way. If Congress were to declare the entire combat zone off-limits to women, for example, the Army in Iraq would suddenly become "15 percent undeployable," she says.

Shock integration happened when the

administration decided to wage a war in Iraq on top of an increasingly complex operation in Afghanistan. And now women in unprecedented combat roles have become essential to sustaining force strength overseas. This situation, and all its unacceptable consequences, will only get worse as long as the Bush administration refuses to initiate troop reductions and limit deployments. The candidates contending to replace Bush, meanwhile, offer little prospect of saner policies: the Democratic candidates have been silent on the realities of co-ed combat, while the Republican nominee insists that we may be in Iraq for another century.

America never consciously chose to send women into combat, but they are there now and in some cases are paying a tragic price. ■

*Kelley Beaucar Vlahos is a Washington, D.C.-based freelance reporter.*

## Dixiecrats' Revenge

How women co-opted the civil-rights movement

By Allan Carlson

BLACK MEN cross swords with white feminists at their peril. That's the hard lesson Barack Obama has learned over the last three months.

In Iowa, Senator Obama claimed the support of 35 percent of Democratic female caucus-goers, compared to 30 percent for Hillary Clinton. "Change" and charisma trumped experience, the pundits said, and the Democrats seemed on the brink of giving their presidential nomination to an African-American man. Indeed, when Obama, wife Michelle, and their two children appeared in Des Moines on caucus night in front of his wildly enthusiastic supporters, they

almost shape-shifted into the Jack Kennedy family of 1960, with one history-making difference.

Then came the New Hampshire debate in which Senator Clinton reminded the audience that electing the first female president would be "change," too. Democratic women began to shake off the African-American's spell. When Obama, in slightly mocking tone, told Clinton that people "like you well enough," women were offended. Her tears in the Portsmouth coffee shop clinched the deal. Late polls showed Obama again prevailing among women, but Clinton won 45 percent of the final female vote, com-



pared to only 30 percent for the senator from Illinois.

Analyst Andrew Kohut of the Pew Research Center explained this shift partly by “the long-standing pattern of pre-election polls overstating support for black candidates among white voters.” When the conflict heated up again over Martin Luther King’s role in the civil-rights movement, Senator Clinton remarked, “I don’t think this campaign is about gender, and I sure hope it isn’t about race.”

Since that time, the contest for the nomination has further polarized the Democratic Party: African-Americans, particularly the men, have rallied to Obama; older white women have kept Clinton in the game. Subtle race-baiting by would-be First Gentlemen Bill Clinton and former vice-presidential candidate Geraldine Ferraro has only aggravated the divide. Clearly, the specific relationship between the African-American male and the white feminist within the Democratic “big tent” needs more attention.

The theoretical basis for this part of the Democratic coalition divide probably lies in Gunnar Myrdal’s classic 1944 study of black-white relations in the United States, *An American Dilemma*. An appendix to

In practice, however, the coalition didn’t work very well. As black-power advocate and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee leader Stokely Carmichael famously explained, “the position of women in SNCC is prone.” Historians have shown how many of the disillusioned and angry women who went South abandoned the fight for racial justice to help launch a renewed feminist campaign.

They quickly had their revenge. It came on Feb. 8, 1964, when the American sociopolitical order underwent a seismic shift. The occasion was a debate in the U.S. House of Representatives over the proposed Civil Rights Act of 1964. The aim of the bill on that Saturday morning—as drafted at the Lyndon Johnson White House—was to end discrimination “on the basis of race, color, religion or national origin” in the areas of voting, public accommodations and education, federally assisted programs, and private employment. “Sex” was not on the list.

Reading between the lines, it was clear that the provision on “private employment”—Title VII—would renew an old New Deal goal from the 1930s: to remove those job barriers resting on race prejudice that prevented African-American men from being good fathers, husbands,

on the breadwinner/homemaker model prevailing among whites. This was the road to racial equality.

Yet the white segregationists in the House, their backs to the wall, were resolved on a desperate action. Dixiecrat Howard Smith of Virginia rose on that February day and, with a broad smile, proposed that the word “sex” be added to the list of prohibited discriminations under Title VII. To the howls of his colleagues, he read a letter he had received from a woman protesting the excess number of American females relative to the count of American men, as revealed by the 1960 census:

Just why the Creator would set up such an imbalance of spinsters, shutting off the ‘right’ of every female to have a husband of her own is, of course, known only to nature. But I am sure you will agree that this is a grave injustice to womankind and something the Congress and President Johnson should take immediate steps to correct.

After his little joke, though, Smith moved to his real point. “Now I am very serious about this amendment,” he told his colleagues. “I think we all recognize ... that all throughout industry women are discriminated against in that ... they do not get as high compensation for their work as do the majority [*sic*] sex.” To bring the matter closer to his fellow politicians’ hearts, he added, “I just want to remind you here that in this election year it is pretty near half of the voters in this country that are affected, so you had better sit up and take notice.”

Some think that Smith’s proposal was simply an effort—unsuccessful in the end—to advance a “killer amendment” to the whole bill. Others suspect that Smith actually saw a devious way to twist the Civil Rights bill in order to undermine its central purpose and thus keep the black population in a form of submission.

## MANY OF THE **DISILLUSIONED AND ANGRY WOMEN WHO WENT SOUTH ABANDONED THE FIGHT FOR RACIAL JUSTICE TO HELP LAUNCH A RENEWED FEMINIST CAMPAIGN.**

this book, authored by his arch-feminist wife, Alva, argued that American women, locked by convention into the roles of homemaker and fulltime mother, suffered an oppression similar to that of the Negroes of her day. As the civil-rights campaign gained momentum around 1960, young, idealistic white women from Vassar, Smith, and so on swarmed into the South, eager to fight the common foe: the patriarchal white male.

and breadwinners. Advocates used an argument that would surface again a year later in the Moynihan Report: since the traditional family home was the basis of American civilization, full citizenship for black Americans required shoring up the economic side of their faltering family system. Disproportionately characterized by matriarchy, female-headed households, and illegitimacy, “the Negro-American family” needed to be reconfigured

Whatever the case, his Dixiecrat colleagues quickly added their support. J. Russell Tuten of Georgia said that as “a man, which places me in the minority and makes me a second class citizen—and the fact that I am white and from the South—I look forward to claiming my rights under this legislation.” And L. Mendel Rivers of South Carolina praised the proposed change for “making it possible for the white Christian woman” to gain the same consideration for employment as “colored” people.

In retrospect, it is clear that half a century of political reforms aimed at buttressing “the traditional family” and built on the ideal of a family-sustaining wage for men hung in the balance. Emanuel Celler, Democrat from Manhattan, the very liberal chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and floor leader for the Civil Rights bill, rose to challenge Smith. Notably, he argued for the natural inequality of woman and man:

You know, the French have a phrase for it when they speak of women and men: ‘vive la difference.’ I think the French are right. Imagine the upheaval that would result from the adoption of blanket language requiring total [sexual] equality. Would male citizens be justified in insisting that women share with them the burdens of compulsory military service? What would become of traditional family relationships? What about alimony? ... Would fathers rank equally with mothers in the right of custody to children? ... This is the entering wedge, an amendment of this sort.

Congressman Celler also noted that the Women’s Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor opposed this amendment, arguing that sex discrimination involved “problems significantly different” from the racial sort.

Edith Green, a Democratic congresswoman from Oregon, attacked Smith’s amendment as an attempt to “jeopardize” the primary purpose of the Civil Rights bill: “For every discrimination that has been made against a woman in this country there has been 10 times as much discrimination against the Negro. ... Whether we want to admit it or not, the main purpose of this legislation today is to try to end the discrimination ... against Negroes.”

#### A MEASURE MEANT TO ENHANCE THE **EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALES** HAD BEEN HIJACKED BY THE FEMINIST CAUSE.

But the equity feminists, then mostly hibernating on the Republican side of Congress, sensed their extraordinary, if peculiar, opportunity. Congresswoman Katharine St. George, a Republican from New York, suggested that the foes of the “sex” amendment still saw women as “chattels.” She added, “Why should women be denied equality of opportunity? Why should women be denied equal pay for equal work?” Catharine May, a Republican from Washington, raised the deep concern of the feminist National Woman’s Party over the effect of an unamended Title VII on “the white, native-born American woman of Christian religion.” Democrat Martha Griffiths of Michigan cited the Alva Myrdal essay in *An American Dilemma* as proof of white male perfidy.

This coalition of white feminists and Dixiecrat segregationists carried the day on a vote of 168 to 133; discrimination in employment on the basis of “sex” would be a federal crime. Two days later, the House approved the Civil Rights Act, as amended. The measure went to the Senate, where Hubert Humphrey pushed the measure through unchanged, throttling a Southern filibuster.

At first blush, it looked like the black male/white feminist coalition had triumphed over The Man. But it quickly grew apparent that a measure meant to enhance the employment prospects of African-American males had been hijacked by the feminist cause. White women outnumbered black men by ten to one, and the former group had huge educational advantages and vastly greater access to good lawyers and other legal levers. The Equal Employment

Opportunity Commission, initially intended to deliver good jobs and stable traditional homes to African-Americans, was quickly swamped by the complaints of white women. Black men went to the back of the line. Over the decades that followed, affirmative action under Title VII nearly doubled the real wages of white women. In comparison, African-American men found their real wages relatively stagnant.

Might this be just what the Dixiecrats intended? They never said. Surely, though, this change in the scope and purpose of the Civil Rights Act is one cause of the high male unemployment rate, the distressing crime levels, and the disordered homes still afflicting a majority of African-Americans.

Now, in the greatest test to date of rival “affirmative actions,” a black male squares off against a white feminist in the quest for the White House. If history is any guide, I predict that the Dixiecrats will win again. ■

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*Allan Carlson is president of The Howard Center for Family, Religion & Society in Rockford, Illinois. His latest book is Third Ways, published by ISI Books.*

# The Gentleman's Page

Men's magazines cultivate virtue—for those who can afford it.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

JUST AS MEN'S MAGAZINES are growing old, they're growing up. Last year, *GQ* marked its 50th anniversary, and *Esquire* is currently celebrating its 75th year. These mags are survivors. *Esquire* managed to promote luxury during the Depression, then cheered on the cultural upheavals of the '60s that put masculinity itself in doubt. *GQ* was born as a pure fashion magazine for men and somehow survived its fascination with putrid color and gender-bending in the 1970s. Improbably, its title is now synonymous with being well dressed in a traditional sense.

Over the past decade, men's magazines successfully resisted an invasion of Brit-based "lad mags," whose circulation quickly surpassed theirs. The vulgarians at *Loaded*, *FHM*, and *Maxim* threatened to overthrow the dry martini and replace it with a Jäger-bomb. But the lads made their mark quickly and now search for new cultural organs. Meanwhile, the traditional men's magazines are producing healthy offspring.

Somehow these publications survived their taste for cultural revolution, beat back the rude upstarts, and have become relevant again by championing a vision of masculinity that is civilized and traditional. Formerly bastions of winking infidelity, they now advance a version of manhood that is sober, refined, and, one it tempted to say, devout—though not religious. But like all goods featured in men's magazines, they've made this too into a luxury item, which only a discerning few can appreciate and perhaps fewer still can afford.

When *Esquire* launched in 1933, *Time* hailed it as a "publisher's dream." Finally, there was "a 'class' magazine for men—like Harper's *Bazaar* and *Vogue* for women." Although it promised racy content, *Esquire* quickly developed a literary reputation by publishing F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway in the '30s and '40s. On its color pages, Laurence Fellows and Leslie Saalburg illustrated the boulevardier styles of the time. Alan Flusser, the current dean of men's style, collects many of these illustrations in his books like *Dressing the Man* in order to instruct his students on what he believes are timeless principles of proportion, pattern, and color.

But *Esquire* was not always a redoubt of good taste. In a decade known for the gray flannel suit and air-raid drills, *Esquire* let its inner lad run wild. By 1950, the magazine swerved into the lanes *Playboy* would later drive. The Alberto Vargas pin-ups drove circulation up, and the magazine became stuffed with cartoons that relied on naughty, and witless, puns. In one example, a young stenographer sits in the lap of her nervous boss, his arm around her waist. The caption: "I'm satisfied, but my husband keeps prodding me to ask for a raise." One can feel the cartoonist nudging at the elbow. "A raise! Get it?"

In that same March 1950 issue, William Laas published "In Defense of Speeding," which constitutes a kind of proto-lad lit. Laas's one argument: let men run wild. "Road-hogging, daydreaming slowpokes choke up traffic and are greater terrors on the highway than fast

drivers who can handle a car well," he wrote. "Why not take the snails off the road?" The advertisements also lack sophistication. One, for a Perry-Mason stem-winder, "The Case of the Cautious Coquette," tells readers, "Beware this luscious blonde—she's a booby trap!"

*Esquire* would quickly improve in the 1960s. It was there that Tom Wolfe pioneered "New Journalism," in which stories were characterized by narrative verve and the centrality of the author as a character. Gay Talese renovated the celebrity profile in 1965, when Frank Sinatra refused to be interviewed by him. The opening sentences are now familiar to every aspiring profiler: "Frank Sinatra, holding a glass of bourbon in one hand and a cigarette in the other, stood in a dark corner of the bar between two attractive but fading blondes who sat waiting for him to say something. But he said nothing..."

By the end of the 1960s, *Esquire* found the form that would carry it to critical acclaim and commercial success for the next four decades. In fact, the template is so established that the content is often the same. Take the May 1968 issue in which Garry Wills examined Richard's Nixon's latest run for high office. Just as in the current issue of *Esquire*, which features a story on John McCain, a dangerously hawkish Republican makes an improbable political comeback by promoting a volatile mix of militarism and moralism. In 1968, the cover shows Nixon being made up by artists. In 2008, we learn that political operator John Weaver used to comb



McCain's hair. In the June 1968 issue, Robert Sherril explores the radical new dangers posed by southern evangelicals in "Power in their Blood." The article includes dark but vague mentions of the Klu Klux Klan and hints at a coming theocracy. Some things never change.

*Esquire* could take its intellectual pretensions pretty far. Thirty years ago, the editors let Alfred Kazin dilate on the subtle differences one finds between Robert Lowell's poetic vision and John Ashberry's. In the same issue, Andrew Tobias favorably reviews Irving Kristol's *Two Cheers for Capitalism*. Tobias knows his audience: "Read this book fellow liberals. It is, in effect, the other side of the story."

On the fashion front, men's magazines took some time to gain their consistency. No one would look at the initial run of *GQ* with the reverence Flusser and other dandies give to *Esquire*. In its founding issue, *Gentlemen's Quarterly* promoted the "jumpajama," a combination jumpsuit and pajama. The counter-culture excited *GQ* a little too much. Some of the most notable recommendations include a "wrestling/swimsuit singlet" in a gigantic yellow and white gingham pattern. In other beachwear, they encouraged men to don a two-piece midriff-baring nylon ensemble that featured a half shirt (with a mock turtle-neck) and a bikini bottom. Worse, in 1968, *GQ* even recommended faux facial hair: "[Some men] find their employers frown on hirsute features, and false facial hair provides them with the opportunity to become weekend and evening swingers."

But the biggest challenge to men's magazines came from men themselves. Mark Simpson, a UK journalist, declared in 1994 that the "metrosexuals" were perhaps "the most promising consumer market of the decade." Writing in *Salon*, Simpson defined the new male archetype: "The typical metrosexual is a young

man with money to spend, living in or within easy reach of a metropolis—because that's where all the best shops, clubs, gyms and hairdressers are. He might be officially gay, straight or bisexual, but this is utterly immaterial because he has clearly taken himself as his own love object and pleasure as his sexual preference." Suddenly the men's magazines were stuffed with advice about manicures, even pedicures.

What then for the young man who thought this primping was womanly? Effete males claimed to be his superiors, and the rules of feminism labeled his instincts radioactive. He liked watching the highlights on "SportsCenter" and the girls on trampolines featured on Comedy Central's "The Man Show." By 1995, he had a magazine: *Maxim*. The lads let him indulge his inner man-child.

NEW JOURNALISM GAVE WAY TO **STUNT JOURNALISM**. HOW MANY CHALUPAS CAN A DOG EAT? WOULD GUMMY WORMS OR DRAKE'S CAKES **TASTE BETTER DEEP FRIED?**

Lad magazines downsized literary content and super-sized their silicone features. What writing remained would be readable in 15 to 30-second bursts. New Journalism gave way to stunt journalism. How many chalupas can a dog eat? Would Gummy Worms or Drake's Cakes taste better deep fried? Lists replaced reviews—"20 Most Awesome Kung-Fu Fight Scenes." Instead of a profiling a \$20-million-a-pic actress and photographing her in a designer dress while she held a cigarette, the lads posed television stars like Elisha Cuthbert on a bed in lingerie. *Esquire* might report war stories, but only *Maxim* delivered the real bombshells, as it did in its photo spread "Women of the Israel Defense Forces." The message was clear. Metrosexuals like "Sideways," soccer, and seduction. Lads like Will Ferrell, football, and flesh.

Soon *Maxim* outstripped all the men's magazines combined in total circulation, surging to 2.5 million readers. And the other lad-mags were catching up quickly. But creating a timely product without reference to anything as complicated as current events exhausted their editors. David Carr wrote in the *International Herald Tribune*, "making lad magazines was tougher than it looked. Every editorial meeting would start with a blank slate, or at best, a few hardy perennials: Nazis? Midgets? Shark attacks? Could we have a Nazi saving a midget being attacked by a shark?"

But the short attention spans and small wallets of the lads' target audience meant lost ad pages at the turn of the millennium. Carr found Greg Gutfeld, former editor of *Stuff* in the U.S. and *Maxim U.K.* lamenting the decline in

profitability: "The only innovation is price and frequency, and the only price that is working is free and the only frequency that is working is daily." *FHM*, the pioneer of the format, closed its U.S. print operations last March. *Maxim* is chasing the readers who are leaving the print product behind by starting a channel on satellite radio and retooling its web operations to compete with CollegeHumor.com and other online portals for frat laughs and web videos.

The rise of the vulgarians seemed to reinvigorate traditional men's magazines. *Details* launched in 2000 and was immediately hailed as "Vogue for men." Publisher Condé Nast liked the sound of that enough to launch *Men's Vogue* in 2005. Both copied the format that *Esquire* established in the 1960s: narrative journalism mixed with celebrity profiles, short reviews, and advice on cloth-

ing and grooming. Having their manhood challenged by the lads, the established mags junked the feminized metro for a more stoic and strong male archetype.

Recognizing that their target demographic is a generation raised by women, men's magazines have increasingly touted traditional tailoring and timeless style. No longer does *GQ* announce the arrival of the one-piece leisure suit. Instead, it instructs readers that they must purchase a navy blue suit for job interviews and gray flannel for other days—the sort of advice a father would give. *Men's Vogue* has a love affair with well-made suits and traditional overcoats, worn by George Clooney, Denzel Washington, and other “men's men” on its covers.

*Details*, widely considered the most gay of the men's magazines, has made itself an enemy of ostentation and a friend of sobriety in style. The magazine has upbraided men who leave their shirts untucked and has gone on record against splayed collars that peek over a jacket's lapels, embroidered jeans, “sporty sunglasses,” and cufflinks on men who are young and undistinguished.

Instead of small features on pedicures, *Esquire* teaches readers how to shine their shoes. Its etiquette pieces instruct on the appropriate times to hold a door open. In sidebars, a sommelier will provide a little knowledge about wines—just enough to impress, not enough to make one overbearing. Over 24 years old? The men's magazines say it's time to ditch your MySpace page. Don't you know that modesty is a virtue and self-promotion a vanity?

The publications that formerly supported the social liberation movements of the '60s and '70s are now scandalized by the results. In 1950, *Esquire* responded to infidelity with a knowing smirk; today it is an unconscionable betrayal. *Details* summed up a men-deserve-respect ethic against what it called “The New Infidelity”:

You are not some fedora-tipping Man of the House who comes home from the office expecting the rump roast to be on the table. Nor are you an aging frat boy who sits in front of the flat-screen with an Icehouse while wifey irons your Red Wings jersey. You are sensitive. You were raised by a working woman. You wipe down the counters after you make the kids' lunches. No decent woman would cheat on a man like that, right?

Apparently, yes. In the latest *GQ*, travel writer Adam Sachs refuses to accept the idea that his marriage can fall apart. As his wife leaves his apartment he decides, “I will save this, I will make passionate declarations and write patient, beautiful letters. ... I'll be forgiving as a saint and deliberate as a killer. ... I will outmaneuver this by superior wit and pure intention and be the bighearted superhero of love...” Chivalry isn't dead.

Not only do these magazines promote fidelity in marriage, they bid their men to “be fruitful and multiply.” Last September, *Details* praised a father-knows-best attitude and found that the coolest thing to be is a father of many children. A Chappaqua resident who works in the financial industry, told the magazine, “I can't be in a house that only has three kids. ... The silence scares me. Three kids is so weak. It doesn't feel like you have any.”

But before people declare men's mags guides for turning boys into men, there is a catch. This revived masculinity does not issue from religious duty, tradition, or even sober reflection. It's a status symbol. You can see it even in the command to have a big family: “Among the hedge-fund guys, it's a joke,” says one Park Avenue woman. “They all have the trophy wife and the apartment and the four kids.” In a sidebar, we learn that having kids will improve your social life: “If you learn how to work the PTA meet-

ing like you would a cocktail party, it can get you nice trips to other families' vacation homes.”

It turns out that the manliness that the men's magazines advance is not for everyone. Rather than being the product of an upbringing or measured by the expectations of society, maturity is accomplished by correctly divvying up great sums of money. Sending several kids to private school is a rare privilege—like driving a Porsche.

Although the magazines take pains to show men that a good suit can be bought for under a thousand dollars, most of the artifacts an *Esquire* man possesses are very expensive. While the promotion of bespoke tailors is good for the very few old-world artisans who can provide them, it has little relevance for the American man who cannot fly to England and drop \$5,000 on one suit.

If successful marriages, dignified clothing, and masculinity itself are only for the elite, our men are in trouble. In the wake of family breakdown and the uneven influence of religious institutions, men's magazines may be among the last institutions in America that promote an ideal of masculinity that is constructive and recognizably manly. Inside their world, men are well read, informed, conventionally liberal, well dressed, faithful, and wealthy. Outside this world are the buffoon fathers of sitcoms, the crass consumers, and the lads.

It's good to see the elites who man our magazines embracing the old American male—outlining his duties, refining his taste, and upgrading his manners. But if American culture cannot find adult male archetypes that speak for the everyman—the man without a loaded 401K—the future looks shabby. Imagine middle-aged boys playing video games that feature shark-riding Nazis and chalupa-eating dogs. One of them shouts, “Honey, can you iron my hockey jersey?” ■

# Fallon Gong

The relentless campaign to bring down a realist

By Philip Giraldi

"IF, IN THE DYING LIGHT of the Bush administration, we go to war with Iran, it'll all come down to one man," the April issue of *Esquire* argued. "He is the rarest of creatures in the Bush universe: the good cop on Iran, and a man of strategic brilliance." The profile went on to describe him as "methodical as President Bush is mercurial" and as "brazenly challenging his commander in chief."

Meet Admiral William Fallon, head of United States Central Command.

Make that former head. Within days of the article's publication, the media was buzzing over the supposed breach between the Bush administration and its top commander in the Middle East. The Pentagon and White House declined comment, but the *Washington Post* reported "administration insiders said the article was being discussed." For his part, Fallon disavowed the piece. Five days later, he was finished.

His letter of resignation regretted the "simple perception that there is" a difference of opinion, conceding that reports of disagreement had become a "distraction." Seeking to close the chapter quickly, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates asserted, "I don't think that there really were differences at all."

Perhaps there were, perhaps there weren't. Fallon's public statements don't suggest that he was single-handedly staving off war with Iran, as *Esquire's* profile implied. Indeed, the most controversial portions were the author's characterizations rather than the admiral's own words. But Fallon did show realist tendencies, and advocates

of the president's agenda couldn't risk a voice for national-interest-based foreign policy in a prominent position. Neither could administration hawks afford for career military officers to be uninhibited about offering frank advice.

The infamous profile sealed his fate, but the campaign against Fallon began much earlier. The American Enterprise Institute's Tom Donnelly said, "You heard negative things about him almost from the moment he was named, and the chorus has been almost unrelieved." Other neocons, realizing that the clock is running out on the Bush administration's ability to strike Iran, took up the refrain.

Because Fallon saw his Central Command's role as managing a series of interrelated crises running from Lebanon in the west to Pakistan in the east, one of his first moves at CENTCOM was to drop the expression "the long war" in official correspondence. The change reflected his belief that all wars should be finite, with obtainable objectives. For neocons, the "long war" is shorthand for the existential conflict against Islamic radicalism, but Fallon did not see the world that way. Thus they labeled him a diplomat rather than a warrior, claiming that he preferred negotiation to using the threat of force, particularly when dealing with Iran. Fallon's physical presence in the Middle East—not at CENTCOM headquarters in Tampa, Florida—meeting with local heads of state and military and naval counterparts was viewed suspiciously, as an indication that he preferred talking to fighting.

Critics further charged Fallon with undercutting our efforts in Iraq by disagreeing with Gen. David Petraeus on the efficacy of the surge. The *Wall Street Journal Online* railed that he had "made more than enough dissenting statements about Iraq, Iran and other things to warrant his dismissal" but went on to admit that Fallon was only one of many miscreants at the Pentagon. Gates, Joint Chiefs Chairman Mike Mullen, and Army Chief of Staff George Casey all reportedly favor a rapid drawdown of troop levels in Iraq. Fallon was by no means the lone dissenter.

But the neocon media rushed to characterize him as mutinous. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that the administration saw Fallon's comments as a "form of insubordination ... publicly trying to undermine Mr. Bush and limit the President's hand on a key administration priority." Michael Ledeen described Fallon as "an object of scorn and sometimes contempt by a significant number of his immediate subordinates," condemning him for seeking a "personal legacy rather than national victory." Michael Barone wrote that Fallon had worked to "openly undercut the commander in chief," was "transfixed with cooperating with China," and believed that "pressuring Israel ... was the way to solve every problem in the Middle East." Frank Gaffney described his "toxic leadership," his being "utterly unserious about the Iranian threat," and his having engaged in "serial acts of insubordination and sabotage..." He added that Fallon foolishly believes that engagement with Iran is the



best way to stop the flow of munitions into Iraq—something high among the recommendations of the bipartisan Iraq Study Group.

The *Washington Times*, in a story headlined “Warriors welcome Fallon’s resignation,” reported that Fallon had failed to protect U.S. troops in Iraq by holding Iran and Syria “accountable,” citing his “lack of reason when it came to Iran’s influence in the region.” In the same pages, Oliver North charged Fallon with insubordination for “publicly disputing administration policy toward an avowed adversary.”

Not to be outdone, *The Weekly Standard*’s Mackubin Thomas Owens condemned Fallon for taking “it on himself to develop and disseminate policy independently of the president,” thereby working to “undercut the cornerstone of the Bush Administration’s Iran policy.”

The *Washington Post* piled on, accusing Fallon of “stating publicly during his travels in the region that there would be no U.S. attack.” The *Post* recommended that a new CENTCOM commander “should be prepared to take military action against Iran and should avoid ostentatious posturing to the contrary.”

Max Boot, who has been sounding the alarm on Fallon for the past year, provided valedictory comments, noting that the CENTCOM commander had “irresponsibly taken the option of force off the table,” which had emboldened “the mullahs to continue developing nuclear weapons and supporting terrorist groups that are killing American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

The problem is that nearly all these assertions are untrue. Evidence for Fallon’s alleged unwillingness to engage Iran militarily consists of comments made in just three interviews and in the profile that he called “poison pen stuff.” And everything Fallon actually said tracked closely with what Gates, Mullen, Condoleezza Rice, and even the

White House were saying. He saw his job in the Middle East as working with allies to build a practical coalition against Iranian ambitions. No American ally in the region—except for Israel—wants a war against Iran. All prefer a negotiated process for resolving differences. It was Fallon’s job to reduce the fear-mongering and bring diverse allies together to shape a co-ordinated answer to the Iranian threat.

In his first interview as CENTCOM chief, with al-Jazeera in September 2007, Fallon was asked if a war was coming. He responded, “I certainly hope not. It is my belief that today there is far too much talk of war. ... This constant drumbeat of conflict is one that strikes me as not helpful ... the vast majority of people want stability, security. ... They really want to live in peace with their neighbors...”

On Nov. 12, 2007, Fallon told the *Financial Times* that a pre-emptive strike against Iran was “not in the offing,” adding, “another war ... is just not where we want to go. Getting Iranian behavior to change ... is the real objective. Attacking them as a means to get to that spot strikes me as not being the first choice...” The interviewer noted that Fallon “did not rule out the possibility of a strike at some point.”

One week later, Fallon told the *Egyptian Gazette*, “We are trying to find ways to work with other countries to get the Iranians to change their behavior.” He added that reports that a U.S. attack was imminent were “not very accurate” and described his objective as encouraging an “atmosphere that will lead to a solution without military force.” He also warned Iran not to “make a mistake and feel that we are afraid of them or not willing to stand up for things that we should do in this region.”

There have been other allegations about Fallon, namely that he told retired DIA Middle Eastern specialist Col. Pat Lang that a war against Iran would “not

happen on my watch.” Rumors circulated that he might resign if given orders to attack Tehran. But Fallon has insisted that he told Lang that war “wasn’t the first course of action” and never confirmed that he considered resignation before the *Esquire* dust-up.

If Fallon’s intention was to avoid war on his watch, he has been successful. But he has paid a high price. While his public sentiments were temperate, the paranoia of administration hawks was so great that this voice of reason could not be permitted to remain. Sources speculate that his departure was hastened at the vice president’s behest, to remove an impediment to Cheney’s efforts to begin assembling an anti-Iran coalition on his recent trip to the Middle East.

The silver lining is that Fallon’s resignation frees him to speak openly about Washington’s Middle East policy. Two previous heads of CENTCOM, Gen. John Abizaid and Maj. Gen. Anthony Zinni, oppose any bombing campaign directed against Iran, fearing what Arnaud de Borchgrave described as “bloody asymmetric retaliation against U.S. interests throughout the Middle East—and beyond.” Both have suggested that the U.S. might have to live with a nuclear-armed Iran.

In its coverage of the Fallon resignation, even the *New York Times* conceded that “a large number of senior military leaders share Admiral Fallon’s broad assessment that a war with Iran would bring unexpected and, perhaps unmanageable, risks elsewhere in the Muslim world and around the globe.”

Among top brass who know the Middle East, William Fallon’s views seem like common sense. That’s why he had to go. ■

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA officer, is a fellow with the American Conservative Defense Alliance.*

# The Audacity of Pope

Will the Pontiff's call for peace faze the warmongers?

By Freddy Gray

ON TUESDAY, April 15, a plane carrying Pope Benedict XVI will land at Andrews Air Force Base. Inside the aircraft, the pontiff, a quiet—some say shy—old man, will brace himself for perhaps the busiest and most important few days of his life.

It is obviously significant, at least symbolically, when the world's foremost religious leader makes a pilgrimage to the most powerful nation on the planet. For this pope, however, at this juncture of history, the trip could be especially momentous. Americans, their economy seemingly collapsing and their military hopelessly entangled in two unending and staggeringly expensive wars, might be particularly receptive to the philosophical insights of an outsider. At any rate, his arrival will offer a brief distraction from the endless media coverage of the presidential elections. For the Vatican, on the other hand, Pope Benedict's East Coast tour provides a unique opportunity for the Catholic Church to preach to the world.

April 16 will be Benedict's 81st birthday. That morning he will visit the White House—only the second time in history a pope has been to the presidential residence. In the afternoon, he will meet his 350 American bishops at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Over the next four days, Benedict XVI will, among other scheduled appointments, preside over two Masses before huge congregations at stadiums in Washington and New York, tour the John Paul II Cultural Center, speak to 20,000 youths at a seminary, address the

United Nations, mark the third anniversary of his election, and pay his respects at Ground Zero. No rest for the holy.

Such a full itinerary gives the pope many chances to make bold and challenging statements about the U.S. and its relationship with the rest of world. What then will Benedict say to America? It is well known, of course, that he has been a fierce and consistent opponent of the Iraq War from its beginning. Will he launch a broadside against the Bush administration's foreign policy? Catholic pundits think it unlikely, especially during a presidential election campaign. "I doubt he'll make many specific policy references, nor will he comment on the U.S. election," says Edward Pentin, Rome correspondent for the *National Catholic Register*. Certainly, Pope Benedict would not want to be seen as endorsing a particular candidate. Despite longstanding complaints about Catholicism muddling the roles of church and state, the Holy See does try—many would say unsuccessfully—to render unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's. Benedict XVI, however, is not one to cease from mental fight for the sake of political etiquette. In September 2006, he enraged many Muslims—to the glee of cheerleaders for the "clash of civilizations" everywhere—by quoting a 14th-century Byzantine emperor as saying that Islam was a violent and inhuman religion. He later apologized, though not for the speech itself, only for causing offense.

Many antiwar Catholics will be hoping that Benedict uses his visit to America to attack the other side of the

perceived civilizational conflict. They want him, for instance, to remonstrate against mass consumerism, rampant free enterprise, and the neoconservative agenda for global democratic revolution.

They may not be disappointed. "From my conversations here with people," says Pentin, who has good contacts inside the Vatican, "it looks as though the pope is to focus on globalization and social issues." Benedict's speeches and homilies in Washington and New York are likely to reflect the themes of his forthcoming social encyclical, which is expected to be published on May 1. The document may touch on subjects that make many conservatives blush. It has long been rumored that the text will contain a landmark statement about global warming. Obviously references to the environment would be about man's role as steward of creation, rather than man's duty to worship trees. Still, this is hardly what one would have expected three years ago from the world's best-known traditionalist Catholic.

In a similar context, Benedict XVI will probably also discuss his Church's commitment to "social justice"—a term so successfully hijacked by the Catholic Left that it now seems synonymous with socialism. This argument will extend to the Vatican's opposition to aggressive global capitalism, rootless individualism, and corporate avarice. These are Western vices, and ones that afflict America as much as they do Europe.

It takes only a short intellectual hop and a skip to understand how Benedict's

condemnation of boundless profiteering is connected to his opposition to the Iraq War. For him, the pursuit of wealth is well and good but should be tempered by the Christian obligations to help the poor and reject worldly treasures. Equally, the spread of democracy, while ostensibly a desirable development, must be accompanied by a commitment to peace and a respect for the rights of others to determine their own way of life.

In Pope Benedict's mind, the Bush administration's attempt to impose democracy in Iraq was gravely wrong. He has repeatedly denounced the war. When asked in 2002 if he considered the invasion just, the then Cardinal Ratzinger answered, "Certainly not... the damage would be greater than the values one hopes to save." On Palm Sunday of this year, just days after a Chaldean archbishop was murdered in northern Iraq, Benedict thundered, "Enough with the slaughters, enough with the violence, enough with the hatred in Iraq!" The angry remark was surely not simply a rebuke aimed at the archbishop's executioners but a reprimand of all the parties—the U.S. foremost among them—who are responsible for the bloodshed.

Any criticism of the United States would, however, almost certainly be outweighed by praise. Benedict XVI is clearly impressed by the vitality of Christianity in America. Only two months ago, he gave a very warm welcome to Mary Ann Glendon, the new U.S. ambassador to the Holy See, applauding the "historic appreciation of the role of religion" in American public discourse. "From the dawn of the Republic," he told Mrs. Glendon, "America has been ... a nation which values the role of religious belief in ensuring a vibrant and ethically sound democratic order."

The pope also commended "the efforts of so many of your fellow-citi-

zens and government leaders to ensure legal protection for God's gift of life from conception to natural death, and the safeguarding of the institution of marriage, acknowledged as a stable union between a man and a woman, and that of the family." Perhaps the safest bet on the pope's U.S. visit is that he will urge the nation's enthusiastic faithful to continue to support the Catholic Church's unwavering stance on these core issues of abortion, stem-cell research, euthanasia, marriage, and the family.

The signs of life in Catholic America are obviously encouraging to Benedict. In 1992, he told the journalist Peter Seewald, "American Catholicism has nowadays become one of the determinative factors in the universal Church. The Church in America is very dynamic."

The prime mission of his papacy, Catholic experts now agree, is to rescue the West from godlessness and the moral relativism that goes with it. America, the only country that has combined First World material progress with sustained public faith, offers important clues as to how this can be done. There still remains, however, the knotty question of how Catholicism's fundamental opposition to relative morality can be squared with the democratic, and very American, principle that one man's beliefs are as good as another's.

Of course, saving the West is not how the pontiff's agenda is understood in liberal sections of the media. In the March issue of *The Atlantic*, Alan Wolfe writes, "Pope Benedict's decision to steer Catholicism in a more traditional direction—a move that effectively forfeits the Church's future in the developed world in order to expand its appeal in developing regions—seems like a winner only in the short run." Wolfe is wrong. Rome is not, as he suggests, giving up on the West to focus on the Third World. Quite the opposite. Benedict XVI was proba-

bly elected precisely because he is a European. After John Paul II's death in 2005, pundits predicted that the next pope would be an African or a Latin American. Instead they got a German intellectual who offered a unique response to the secularist challenge to Catholicism.

Ratzinger is thought to have chosen his papal name in honor of St. Benedict, the founder of the monastic order that re-energized the evangelization of Europe. Benedict XVI has visited Poland, Germany, France, Turkey, and rapidly modernizing Brazil. In addition to his venture in America, he will also go to Australia in 2008. It is clear that Pope Benedict's priority is to fight the growing secularism of the developed world. And to do that, he needs America's loyal army of Christian soldiers, both Catholic and Protestant.

That said, American religiosity is very far from conforming to what the pope would consider the Christian ideal. A recent Pew survey found that Americans switch religion almost as readily as they move home. Most worryingly for Rome, one in every ten U.S. citizens is a lapsed Catholic. Among those who do practice, there is an energetic and devout core of faithful followers, yet many self-described Catholics make little attempt to live their lives according to the teachings of their Church. Benedict XVI naturally finds this lax approach to the faith disturbing. Before he became pope, Cardinal Ratzinger said that he would rather the Church was a smaller community of devout believers than a large mass of vague and uncommitted Christians.

Yet Benedict's message to Americans will not be pessimistic. This is a pope whose last encyclical was entitled *Saved in Hope*. And it is quite possible that he thinks of America, despite all its flaws and foreign policy failings, as still the last best hope of earth. ■



# Pushing Latin America Left

South America briefly seemed primed to explode in early March with the escalation of an international incident between Colombia and its neighbors, Venezuela

and Ecuador. The episode was the result of a strike inside Ecuador's territory by the Colombian military, which had targeted "Raul Reyes," a leading member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) terrorist-cum-narco-trafficking organization. The crisis ended as quickly as it began. All sides climbed down under pressure from the U.S. and the Organization of American States.

Colombia claims to have evidence of links between its two neighbors and FARC, including campaign contributions to the current Ecuadorian president. But Colombia has had to acknowledge its own violation of Ecuadorian sovereignty and international law. Lost in the flurry of recriminations is the connection of these events to U.S. policy and the ambitions of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez.

Despite Chavez's plummeting popularity at home and the defeat of a referendum that would have removed presidential term limits and enhanced his ability to enact his "Bolivarian" socialist agenda, many of Chavez's American critics see him as a growing danger. Between his pursuit of Russian military equipment and his diplomatic ties to the regime in Tehran, Chavez has served as an ideal bogeyman for American interventionists in the Western hemisphere. Yet one thing that has become clear after the border crisis is that fears of a Venezuelan threat are baseless. The country is too weak and dependent on local proxies to exert any influence outside its borders.

Besides relying heavily on oil revenues—which puts constraints on how far it can take its largely rhetorical hos-

tility to one of its chief customers, the United States—Chavez's government dares only push Colombia so far by tacitly aiding FARC and Colombian President Alvaro Uribe's political opponents, in part because Venezuela depends on Colombia for much of its food supply. Politically, Chavez lacks the broad popular support he once had and can ill afford an open conflict with Colombia, which would create severe economic dislocation and expose the hollowness of his military machine.

Meanwhile, Colombia is in no position to press the issue. The center-right Uribe is increasingly isolated diplomatically in a continent that has been trending to the left, and he has already exhausted the patience of other South American governments. Uribe's use of military aid provided by the United States has left him with few allies in the region. The connection with Washington is particularly important because the tactics involved in the U.S.-sponsored drug war in Colombia and the military aid America provides to help suppress FARC have intensified and broadened the conflict into a regional problem.

Initially intended as a combination of development aid and drug interdiction, Plan Colombia has been the framework for U.S.-backed aerial eradication of coca plants and training of the Colombian military, with the ultimate goal of combating FARC. Despite the counterproductive effects of the militarization and the eradication policy, which has driven many coca farmers to support FARC, Plan Colombia has become the

centerpiece of American policy in the country—and, unfortunately, the model for attacking the poppy supply in Afghanistan, to the ultimate benefit of the resurgent Taliban.

Plan Colombia represents one part of a larger story that helps explain the sharp increase of anti-U.S. sentiment in Latin America, a trend that has propelled Rafael Correa and Evo Morales to power in Ecuador and Bolivia. Generally ignored except as a producer of natural gas, Bolivia has seen its government captured by a powerful indigenous Aymara populism that combines a socialist rejection of neoliberal trade policies with a political movement centered around the coca farmers, who resent the effects of the drug war. Correa was elected in Ecuador partly on the strength of his promise to remove the U.S. airbase that participates in drug interdiction.

The border crisis arose from the consequences of the drug war, the increasingly common interests of left-populists and narco-traffickers in resisting that war, U.S. military aid to Colombia—and, arguably, the precedent set in Iraq of ignoring another state's sovereignty. The rise of Correa and Chavez would also have been much less likely were it not for the popular backlash against neoliberal policies that tend to benefit local oligarchs.

In his State of the Union address this year, President Bush said of the Colombia free trade bill before Congress: "If we fail to pass this agreement, we will embolden the purveyors of false populism in our hemisphere." On the contrary, there is every reason to think that the agreement will fuel even more social and economic distress, strengthen Uribe's opponents and FARC, and thereby undermine one of the last clearly pro-American governments on the continent. ■

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[Under the Same Moon]

### East Side Story

By Steve Sailer

THE ONCE LIVELY Mexican film industry stagnated after it was nationalized in the late 1950s but revived in the 1990s with the loosening of the government's velvet stranglehold on the arts. Last year three art-house films by Mexican directors, "Babel," "Pan's Labyrinth," and "Children of Men," garnered a total of 16 Oscar nominations.

Meanwhile, the number of Mexicans in the United States continues to soar, eliciting the interest of movie moguls hoping somehow to woo the enormous but opaque illegal-immigrant market away from the Univision television network. (Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ" was a huge hit among undocumented filmgoers, but Hollywood would rather not remember that missed opportunity.)

Expecting synergy, the Weinstein Company and Fox Searchlight paid \$5 million at the 2007 Sundance Film Festival for "Under the Same Moon," a sentimental family film made by Patricia Riggen, daughter of a Guadalajara surgeon. (Part of the film's \$2 million budget was provided by the Mexican government.)

"Under the Same Moon" tells the dual stories of a 9-year-old boy who stays with his grandmother in Sonora and his illegal immigrant mother, who has lived in a garage in East L.A. for four years so

she can send him \$300 per month she earns cleaning expensive homes. Neither one has a telephone, perhaps due to the high phone charges imposed by Mexico's private landline monopoly, which has made its owner, Carlos Slim, the second richest man in the world. Mother and son communicate only via a Sunday morning call from payphone to payphone. When the lad's grandmother dies, he pluckily sets off for Los Angeles. Meanwhile, not knowing the boy is on his way, his mother vacillates over whether to marry a handsome security guard with a green card or return to Mexico to be with her son.

Theorizing that "Under the Same Moon" could be, in the words of the old "Saturday Night Live" parody ad, both a floor wax and a dessert topping, the studios released it simultaneously both in downscale theaters in Latino neighborhoods and in upscale cinemas for Anglos who like socially conscious foreign films with subtitles.

Through inept planning, I managed to check out both prongs of this novel marketing strategy. By the time I arrived at The Plant in heavily Latino Van Nuys—the curious title of this power mall built on the site of an old Chevy factory commemorates the days when cars and planes, not just movies, were manufactured in the San Fernando Valley—the 9:40 Saturday night show had sold out.

So I drove south to the cinephile's latest venue, the Arclight on tony Ventura Blvd., for the 10:30 show, which turned out to be almost empty. Apparently, if the residents of the Hollywood Hills are really interested in hearing about the lives of illegal aliens, they won't pay \$12.75 to see "Under the Same

Moon," they'll just strike up a conversation with their servants. Maybe because of the film's maid's-eye view of Los Angeles's Anglo elite as stuck-up and cold-blooded, however, they aren't.

Not surprisingly, "Under the Same Moon" works better as a floor wax than as a dessert topping. Its cast of *telenovela* stars delivers melodramatic *telenovela*-quality performances, and the screenplay is unsophisticated.

One important point that "Under the Same Moon" drives home to Americans who assume that everybody must long to live in America is that millions of Mexican immigrants dream constantly about going home.

It's not just that Mexico isn't really that poor anymore (life expectancy is now 75.6 years, compared to 78.0 here). To Latin Americans from small colonial towns, where social life centers organically around the plaza, California cities, with no focal points but endless strip-malls, seem dishearteningly featureless. As Gertrude Stein said of Oakland, "There is no there there."

Thus, when the child finally arrives in East L.A. knowing only that his mother will try to call him the next morning from a street corner that has a laundromat, pizza parlor, and mural, he begins searching, only to discover, nightmarishly, that every corner looks like that.

In contrast, I once had to arrange to meet a friend in the fount of Latin culture, Rome, a city neither of us had ever visited before. We eventually agreed that we would get together at the Egyptian obelisk in Bernini's great piazza in front of St. Peter's. Now, there is most definitely a there there. ■

Rated PG-13 for some mature thematic elements.

## BOOKS

[*The Islamist: Why I Joined Radical Islam in Britain, What I Saw Inside, and Why I Left*, Ed Husain, Penguin, 304 pages]

# How I Found Allah and Quit the Jihad

By Piers Paul Read

ED HUSAIN—the Ed is short for Mohammed, not Edward—was born in Britain to Muslim parents from the Indian subcontinent and raised in the East End of London. This is the poorest part of the city, for centuries home to the cockney working class and successive waves of penniless immigrants. The mosque where Ed Husain prayed with his parents had been built as a Calvinist “temple” for Huguenot refugees from Louis XIV’s France. Later it served as a synagogue for Jews escaping the pogroms in Russia.

What became of these minorities is pertinent to the theme of this book. As they prospered, the Huguenots and the Jews moved out of London’s East End. The Huguenots were assimilated into British society and are no longer identifiable as a distinct minority; the Jews, on the other hand, though they are fully integrated into the social and political life of the nation, retain a distinct identity, as they do in the United States. Like other identifiable minorities, they are mostly to be found in cities such as London and Leeds. Urban Britain in the 21st century is as much a melting pot as New York and, by and large, Britain has been successful in absorbing immigrants from all over the world. The sons and daughters of Irish labourers, Indian shopkeepers, and Cypriot barbers are now surgeons, bankers, and corporate lawyers. Their religious beliefs as

Catholics, Orthodox Christians, or Hindus have no relevance to their status as citizens of the United Kingdom.

Is the same true for Muslims? As a child Ed Husain was told by his father “that Islam was spiritual, internal and about drawing closer to God and not about radical politics...” His father’s heroes were Mahatma Ghandi and Winston Churchill, and his spiritual guide a mystic guru from Sylhet on the India-Bangladesh border, Shaika Abd al-Latif. The secular education Husain received at his local comprehensive school was compatible with this spiritual understanding of Islam.

There were tensions. Husain was the butt of racial abuse, and there was a conflict between the values of Islam and “cool Britannia”:

My generation of young British Muslims was torn between two cultures. The mainstream British lifestyle of dating, pre-marital sex, living together, and dissolution of partnerships with comparatively little fuss was not something that appealed to us. Simultaneously, the customs of our parents’ generation—arranged marriages with cousins—were equally abhorred.

Ironically, it was the teacher of religious education at his school, a Mrs. Rainey, who set young Husain on the path toward Islamic extremism: she gave him the school’s set book on Husain’s own religion, *Islam: Beliefs and Teachings* by Gulam Sarwar. “Religion and politics are one and the same in Islam,” Sarwar wrote. “They are intertwined.” Sarwar lamented the absence of any truly Islamic state in the world today and recommended movements that sought to bring one about—the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East and Jamat-e-Islami on the Indian subcontinent.

With his friend Falik, Husain began to pray at the East London mosque that “housed the infrastructures of activist organizations” such as the Young Muslim Organization, the YMO. The early chapters of *The Islamist* require

concentration: it is difficult to comprehend the complexities of Islamic activism both on a practical and theoretical level. Husain cites the different ideologies such as Abul Ala Maududi and Syed Qutb and the different factions such as JIMAS (Movement for the Revival of the Prophet’s Way), Salafism, Wahhabism or the Hizb ut-Tahrir. The ideological infighting reminds one of similar bickering on the Left—Bolsheviks, Mensheviks, Leninists, Trotskyists, Stakhanovites, and so on. There are further parallels. Islamists like Communists are universalists with loyalties that transcend the nation state:

The Muslim nation was a global nation, and we all had a religious obligation to establish a global state that would rival the United States and Europe. This was not a fantasy. Not all that long ago the Ottoman Empire had roared at the gates of Europe: we would not only repeat history, we would make it.

This was the ideology of Hizb ut-Tahrir, the most extreme of the Islamist organizations, which Husain joined while studying for his exams at a college of further education. Almost all of his fellow students were the sons and daughters of immigrants. He writes:

Yes, we attended a British educational institution in London but there was nothing particularly British about us. It might as well have been Cairo or Karachi. Cut off from Britain, isolated from the Eastern culture of our parents, Islamism provided us with a purpose and a place in life. More importantly, we felt as though we were the pioneers, at the cutting edge of this new global development of confronting the West in its own back yard.

Husain and his friends in Hizb ut-Tahrir organized meetings and distributed pamphlets among the students. They pointed to the “decadence” of British society—pornography, prostitution, the highest rates in Europe for



abortion, divorce, and single-parent-hood—and to the humiliation of Islam in the Middle East thanks to Western military intervention, alliances with the corrupt despots in Arabia and the Gulf, double-talk about democracy, and above all support for Israel. There was also, at that time, the civil war in the Balkans. A potent aid to recruitment into Hizb ut-Tahrir was the spectacle of ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. Christian Serbs were killing Muslim Bosnians and the West was doing nothing to prevent it.

**THEY POINTED TO THE “DECADENCE” OF BRITISH SOCIETY—PORNOGRAPHY, THE HIGHEST RATES IN EUROPE FOR ABORTION, DIVORCE, AND SINGLE-PARENTHOOD—AND TO THE HUMILIATION OF ISLAM IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ALLIANCES WITH THE CORRUPT DESPOTS IN ARABIA, AND ABOVE ALL SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL.**

This agitprop met with considerable success. Muslim girls started to wear the *hijab* and “in common rooms Muslims played games of pool in Muslim-only groups. In canteens Muslims socialized only among themselves. Being a Muslim was a badge of pride.” Yet Husain became alarmed when this self-segregation by Muslim students degenerated into a gang culture. Some carried knives; there was a confrontation and a non-Muslim was killed.

Other factors drew Husain away from Islamism. Many of his comrades-in-arms did not practice what they preached: they were “in relationships with the ‘sisters.’” Political activism had detracted from Husain’s inner consciousness of God and caused him to neglect his studies; “If you want to change the world,” one of his teachers told him, “then you must get an education first.” And Husain fell in love.

Disillusion with Hizb ut-Tahrir did not lead Husain to lose his faith in Islam. He says he gave “much thought to Christianity,” but rejected it because “In my mind, if there was a God out there, God did not have children. And certainly a man did not, could not, become God.” Instead Husain returned to Islam as an

interior, spiritual religion and joined the Labour Party—“an act of defiance.”

Ed Husain is clearly an intelligent young man who has taken his teacher’s advice about education, but gaps remain in his understanding. Christians do not believe that a man became God but that God became a man. Husain also retains some illusions about Islam. Although Mohammed allowed a man to have four wives, any number of concubines, and divorce his wives at will, he was, Husain tells us, “a founding father

of female emancipation.” Husain thinks the Prophet would have shrugged off the Danish cartoons, but after his victory in the Battle of Badr in 625, Mohammed ordered the execution of two poets who had criticized his writing. Husain praises Sufism and the magnanimity of Saladin, but it was Sufi mystics who on Saladin’s orders executed the 230 Templar knights captured at the Battle of Hattin.

After marrying, Husain taught English for the British Council first in Syria, then Saudi Arabia. He praises the religious tolerance he found in Syria, but fails to give credit to Syria’s Ba’ath Socialist regime. He excoriates the Saudis, contrasting the way in which “millions of people have been naturalized as British citizens, more in the United States and Canada” while the Wahhabi Saudis deny citizenship to the fellow Muslims who lived and worked in their country for decades. “It was only in the comfort of Britain that Islamists could come out with such radical, utopian slogans as ... one Muslim nation. The racist reality of the Arab psyche would *never* accept black and white people as equal...”

The shortcomings of the West’s allies in the Middle East—Saudi Arabia and

the Gulf—are well documented. What is of value in *The Islamist* is the insight it provides into what is going on in Muslim communities in Britain. Much of what Husain describes takes place before 9/11 or the terrorist attacks on the London underground on July 7, 2005. Does it help us to understand the mindset of the perpetrators? “A primary reason,” Husain tells us, “for Western failure in the War on Terror is ... an innate inability to understand the Islamist psyche.” But is there a single psyche to understand? Islamists in Britain, he tells us, “are a diverse and complicated phenomenon. They are divided by age, ethnicity, class, geography and their allegiances to Islamists in Southeast Asia or the Arab World.”

*The Islamist* is stylistically pedestrian, but it provokes thought. What are the limits of free speech? Should our first loyalty always be to a nation state? If Britain rejected the legitimacy of the state of Israel and worked against it, where would the loyalties of the Jewish community in Britain lie? Is it beyond dispute, as the French Dominican Jacques Jomier wrote in *The Bible and the Koran*, that “the Koran texts are not conducive to peace”? And should moderate Muslims be blamed for failing to disown them? Are the young Britons who go to fight for a cause they support in Bosnia or Iraq different in kind from those who went to fight for the Left in the Spanish Civil War? Is the political activism of Islamists in our universities any worse than that of Marxists? Think of the Baader-Meinhof gang in Germany and the Red Brigades in Italy. Indeed how different are they from the young terrorists portrayed by Dostoyevsky in *The Devils*? Perhaps we should resign ourselves to the fact that rebels will always find a cause. ■

*Piers Paul Read is a British author whose works include Alive: The Story of the Andes Survivors, a history of the crusading order, The Templars, and most recently a collection of essays, Hell and Other Destinations.*

[*Chasing the Flame: Sergio Vieira De Mello and the Fight to Save the World, Samantha Power, Allen Lane, 640 pages*]

## The Man from UNHCR

By Wayne Merry

BOOKS NOW OFTEN come with both title and subtitle to tweak the customer's attention. The subtitle of Samantha Power's new book certainly raised my eyebrows. "The Fight to Save the World"? Good Lord. Immediately, I recalled a volume from the opposite end of the political spectrum entitled *An End To Evil*. Surely these are tasks for a messiah, not mere mortals? No, our authors see them as legitimate ambitions for the American Republic.

In the case of Samantha Power, the issue is relevant given her close association with Barack Obama. Power worked in the senator's office and was an adviser to his campaign until her recent public gaffe describing Hillary Clinton as a "monster." Despite this misstep, she could reasonably anticipate a position in an Obama administration. Does she see the subject of her new book, the Brazilian-born United Nations humanitarian affairs official Sergio Vieira de Mello, as an inspiration for that putative role? Evidently. In the acknowledgments at the end of the volume she describes Obama as "the person whose rigor and compassion bear the closest resemblance to Sergio's that I have ever seen." What does the comparison imply for the counsel she might give a future president?

Sergio Vieira de Mello is a good subject for a biography, certainly more worthy than much of the political pulp that plagues an election year. He came to the world's attention as the earliest VIP victim of a terrorist bombing in Baghdad in August 2003, when the United Nations headquarters in Iraq was destroyed. By that time, Vieira de Mello had become something of a legend

within the UN system and among humanitarian organizations, although he was often a subject of controversy. Power's description of his painful and pointless death at the hands of al-Qaeda—which blamed him, among other things, for separating predominantly Catholic East Timor from largely Muslim Indonesia—is genuinely moving. There are hundreds of thousands of families around the globe today who owe their livelihoods, if not their very lives, to his efforts. That is a towering legacy for almost any individual, let alone one who operated within the limits of multilateral bureaucracy.

Vieira de Mello's career illustrates the dichotomy of a world that is flat in the distribution of individual talent but jagged in opportunities for that talent to flourish. A person born in Belgium or Botswana is just as likely to be gifted as one born in America or China, but far less likely to develop those gifts, especially in international public affairs.

Today, however, the multilateral sector provides outlets for the abilities and ambitions of people born outside the great powers. It is noteworthy that Vieira de Mello never served his native country in any capacity, and Brazil took official notice of him only after his death. He joined the UN almost by accident as a very young man—he needed some kind of job—but gave the institution a loyalty, dedication, and even passion often associated with patriotism. In an organization that was notorious for its time-servers and cynics, he believed that the UN spelled legitimacy. In an earlier century, he might have devoted his talents to a religious order, a corporation, or—given his early Marxist convictions—the Revolution.

Only 55 at the time of his death, Vieira de Mello had encountered a kind of inversion of the Peter Principle: he had not reached the limit of his own competence, but had exceeded that of the United Nations. His Baghdad mission was doomed by decisions already made in Washington, while in New York the UN leadership wanted to play a role in Iraq simply to demonstrate its continu-

ing relevance. As one UN official recalled, "That was the whole plan: Sergio will fix it." He died trying.

Power is balanced about her subject's virtues and contradictions, yet she does not recognize that a powerful motive for Vieira de Mello was the pursuit of adventure. This is nothing unusual: adventure is for young men what romance is for young women. And Vieira de Mello never lost the impulse, as he showed with his passion for "the field" and loathing for office work, his fitness and dress obsessions, his daring and risk-taking in very hazardous circumstances, his fondness for James Bond movies, his repeated romantic attachments, and sadly his neglect for his duties as a husband and father. In a different age, he might have been a conquistador. His charisma was powerful, but he used it to help the world's victims. He became, in essence, a humanitarian soldier of fortune. He certainly could have made a real fortune elsewhere.

Vieira de Mello repeatedly encountered the conflict between, as one colleague described it, "the UN that meets and the UN that does." Most of us see the UN through its deliberative and rhetorical bodies, but the system contains a number of semi-autonomous entities, some providing services that almost nobody else will. One of the most important is the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, which was Vieira de Mello's institutional home for most of his career. Often criticized by those with immaculate hands, UNHCR does much of the humanitarian dirty work the world prefers to ignore.

Vieira de Mello brought great intelligence, stamina, a sense of humor, and massive charm to the role. He was a genuinely considerate person, whether toward secretaries or refugees, but he hated making enemies. He was a highly manipulative and successful diplomat, even if he compulsively avoided giving offense, which effective diplomacy sometimes requires. Vieira de Mello courted controversy for pursuing the interests of refugees to the point of dealing without prejudice with the Khmer

Rouge leadership, authors of Central African genocide, and a raft of other unsavory characters in crisis situations around the world. Increasingly he recognized that humanitarian and human-rights standards often contradict each other. He almost always chose to shake hands with the devil in order to “deliver groceries” to the victims of armed conflicts. Over time, the ethical dilemmas of his job eroded his beliefs—though not his dedication.

The story of Sergio Vieira de Mello shows how influential governments of the world, including our own, maintain the United Nations as a vehicle for the inevitable moral compromises they would rather not face directly. From genocide to ethnic cleansing, from Rwanda to Cambodia, the UN is a mechanism of plausible deniability for its member states; it is a crucible for shameful acts—including acts of omission—that the modern media no longer permits governments to engage in themselves. If you think that overstates, read the book.

Samantha Power has written a persuasive biography but an unconvincing policy manual. I find it difficult to believe that Vieira de Mello himself would not have reacted to the title page with incredulity and even amusement. Chasing what “flame”? We are told in the epilogue, “the flame of idealism that motivated some to strive combat injustice.” That is pretty vague and could cover a host of sins as well as virtues. The greatest crimes are always justified by the highest ideals. And “saving the world”? Sergio Vieira de Mello was a man of ideals and of ambition, but he stopped far short of megalomania.

Perhaps Power should have advanced practical proposals for assisting humanitarian agencies—whether UN, national, or private—to deal with the violence that often overwhelms their efforts. Vieira de Mello never found a solution to this problem, though he wisely believed that soldiers make bad policemen. It was police he always needed and called for but never obtained in time or adequate numbers. There is a real humanitarian problem in need of a solution.

Ultimately, however, governments are not human beings. While the best accept some obligation to humanity, they must refuse the moral commitments of the genuinely good person, let alone those of the saintly. In many circumstances, governments must simply let things be. This is because governments—or states, in the more common international parlance—are driven by interests, not ethics. States have primary responsibilities to their citizens and to the perpetuation of the independence, freedom of action, security, wealth, and well being of their own societies. It is not the business of any government to “fight to save the world.”

Indeed, the crisis of our country’s position in the world today is in large measure the result of such utopian hubris. We tried to “transform” one corner of the world, while advocating something unclearly labeled “democracy,” and have reaped the whirlwind. Neoliberalism and neoconservatism got

us into this mess by seeking to “save the world.” It is the task of any future president to get us out. “To strive to combat injustice” won’t cut it. The United States is unable to enunciate any idealistic international program that would be widely accepted. No matter our motives or intent, the world will interpret our purpose as malicious. A generation ago, the reputation of this country around the globe stood far above that of the United Nations; today it is lower. The next president should try to rebuild our capacity to influence the world and our good name as a nation.

Whoever takes the oath of office on Jan. 20, 2009 will face external challenges guaranteed to relegate the issues raised by Samantha Power to the comparative sidelines of American policy. I do not say humanitarian issues are unimportant, but they must get in line behind other, more pressing problems. Do we really want to save the world? Then the top of my priority list would be stemming the proliferation of weapons and technologies of terrifying destructiveness. After that we need to formulate a multinational response to the spread of new forms of contagious disease, such as drug-resistant tuberculosis. Other crucial issues include global energy use, worldwide inflation in commodities, dislocations in trade and international finance, the continuing crisis of both legitimacy and competence of most Muslim states, and the broad shift of international relations from one centered on the trans-Atlantic region to one based around the Pacific. None of these topics figures in Power’s book, but all will be waiting in the Oval Office when the new occupant arrives. Even our great country can affect only the margins of global issues; America can best help humanity by tending to our legitimate role in the world and knowing when to walk by on the other side. ■

*Wayne Merry is a former State Department and Pentagon official and a founding member of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy.*

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[*The New York Intellectuals Reader*, Neil Jumonville, ed., Routledge, 456 pages]

## Made in Manhattan

By Paul Gottfried

*The New York Intellectuals Reader* is a sequel of sorts to editor Neil Jumonville's earlier work *Critical Crossroads*, which dealt with some of the same figures of the New York highbrow set. In *Critical Crossroads*, Jumonville focused on *Partisan Review*, a journal founded in 1940 by a circle of mostly Jewish Leftists who were then breaking—or had already broken—from the Communist Party. In *The New York Intellectuals Reader*, we are presented with excerpts from this group's contributions to *Partisan Review* and other periodicals that they and their disciples founded and maintained over several generations.

Almost all of the writers here excerpted—Philip Rahv, Clement Greenberg, Irving Kristol, Norman Podhoretz, Daniel Bell, Meyer Schapiro, Lionel and Diana Trilling, Irving Howe, Alfred Kazin, and Sidney Hook—shared a similar ethnic background. They came from immigrant parents who had settled on New York's Lower East Side. The offspring of these immigrants studied and debated politics at City College of New York or Brooklyn College. Unlike the Sephardic and German Jews who had arrived before them in the U.S., the more easily identified and often radicalized Jews from Lithuania or the Ukraine encountered resistance throughout American society. Columbia and the other Ivies were reluctant to admit them as students and refused to hire them as professors until the 1950s. Of this group, the English professor Trilling and the art historian Schapiro were the first to make it onto the Columbia faculty. (Despite his adoption of Eastern European Jewish quirks, Richard Hofstadter,

who also joined Columbia, had a Protestant mother and had been raised as a Lutheran in Buffalo.)

Jumonville suggests that his subjects, having been denied other outlets for their theorizing energies, decided to found their own magazines. The reality was perhaps more complicated. With the exception of Dwight Macdonald, C. Wright Mill, Mary McCarthy and the German refugee Hannah Arendt, the *Partisan Review* circle seems to have been restricted to a specific Jewish subculture. *Partisan Review*, and later *Dissent*, *Commentary*, and *Encounter* were their publications of choice, magazines in which the contributors could present their own political, cultural, and existential concerns without having to please the gentile society from which they felt excluded. Each publication mirrored the mind and consciousness of the group that established it.

Jumonville divides his subjects into generational clusters, attaching certain attributes to each. He views the succession of generations—extending from such representative figures as Philip Rahv, to Daniel Bell and Irving Kristol, down to Norman Podhoretz—as moving steadily in a particular ideological direction. As his subjects became increasingly assimilated to and comfortable in American life, they shifted toward the center and then toward the right.

The anthologist also notes certain pivotal themes that interested each particular generation. The first generation sought a leftist socialist position that would allow them to support revolutionary change without being identified with Stalin's dictatorship. They denounced McCarthyism and other manifestations of post-World War II anticommunism while simultaneously depicting the Soviets as "totalitarian." At the same time, this generation tried to push a certain kind of Marxist esthetic, stressing the social background of artistic and literary works. For those adopting this perspective, the principal adversaries were the New Critics, such as Kenneth Burke, Yvor Winters, and Cleanth Brooks, who were dismissive of social influence in their literary studies.

The second generation, typified by Bell, Kristol, and S.M. Lipset, overcame the alienation from American life and constructed the influential theory that the U.S. was experiencing the "end of ideology." In a moderate welfare-state democracy, with a vigorous mixed economy, the social conflicts that had plagued Europe and even an earlier America were things of the past. Americans might quarrel over political issues; they were not likely, however, to be divided again by sharp class differences. In the third generation, represented by Podhoretz and other neoconservatives, the same tendency continued to unfold. The descendants of Eastern European Jewish immigrants who were active among New York's public intellectuals eventually claimed the mantle of American patriotism. The rise of this third cohort as leaders of the American conservative movement underscored this Americanizing process.

One of Jumonville's useful contributions is to note a frequently neglected characteristic of his first group. Members of the *Partisan Review* circle, exemplified by *PR* founder Rahv, flaunted their distance from American life. Until his death in 1973, Rahv went out of his way to call himself a "European." Although he and his colleagues had sprung from immigrant families that had come from the Eastern margin of European civilization, from Jewish ghettos in the Russian Pale of Settlement, they became eagerly European after arriving in the United States. This may have largely been a pose—in the same way that many of them sported French berets—but it reflected their deep anxiety about the "real America" across the Hudson, one that was imagined to be peopled by Protestant bigots and raving McCarthyites. Europe was safely at a distance, still ravaged from the last war, and Soviet armies had overrun the Eastern part of the continent. A prostrate Europe posed no threat to these intellectuals, who also incidentally showed little interest in Jewish nationalism.

There was a positive side to this obsession with things European. This

anthology is full of intriguing references to modern European literary and artistic figures, including such stars of the cultural Right as Louis-Ferdinand Céline, Gottfried Benn, and T.S. Eliot. In 1949, Dwight Macdonald in his own magazine, *Politics*, published an enthusiastic endorsement of the Bollinger Committee's decision to award its annual literary prize to the Modernist poet Ezra Pound. Pound had been arrested and submitted to especially grim treatment after World War II for his pro-Axis speeches delivered in Mussolini's Italy. Furthermore, the work for which he received the Bollinger Prize, *The Pisan Cantos*, included grossly anti-Semitic references. Yet for Macdonald and perhaps others in the New York circle, Pound's achievements as a literary innovator trumped his unfortunate political associations and anti-Jewish opinions. And while the *Commentary* crowd gave a cold shoulder to Southern literature, earlier New York intellectual publications treated the genre sympathetically. Both *Partisan Review* and *Dissent* talked up the novels of William Faulkner and pointed approvingly to his stream of consciousness technique.

One critical reason, treated by Alexander Bloom in *Prodigal Sons*, for Norman Podhoretz's break with other New York Jewish intellectuals was their lack of concern about anti-Semitism. Podhoretz complained that his mentors had praised authors who transmitted anti-Jewish ideas. He was further troubled by the reluctance of older-generation Jewish intellectuals to take strongly pro-Zionist political positions. Given his worldview, he was of course correct. *Partisan Review* and in its early years *Dissent* would never reveal the same militantly Zionist edge as *Commentary* under Podhoretz's watch. Nor would one find in the latter any sympathy toward European thinkers and authors who were critical of Jews or Jewish influence.

Jumonville's focus on the intergenerational journey toward Americanization may have its limits. Although Alfred Kazin scandalized his peers in 1942 when he published *On Native Grounds*,

his patriotic appraisal of Faulkner's works, this hymn to "our American culture" was not entirely out of place among the Jewish New York cognoscenti. It was only premature. By the 1950s, academic and professional barriers to Kazin's co-ethnics were coming down, and by the 1960s the New York Jewish immigrants and their children—whose alienation had been poured into *Partisan Review* and *Dissent*—were achieving a social success that had once been unimaginable.

It would be wrong to insist, however, that the uneasiness about a strange land that had been present among the first generation disappeared with the shift from the second to the third. That sense of marginality persisted, for example, in the stress on the "paranoid style" of heartland Americans and in their association of Goldwater Republicans with the "extreme Right"—both preoccupations that one could find in Bell and other representatives of the second cohort. Like the American Jewish Committee's sponsored anthology on prejudice, *The Authoritarian Personality*, the emphasis of the New York intellectuals on white Christian psychic disorders could be described as sociological window dressing. It expressed their persistent fear that outside of New York, things were still grim for urban Jews.

Even more importantly, another process, starting with the second generation and continuing into the third, reduced the sense of alienation felt by New York intellectuals. Jumonville's subjects set about revising American history in such a way as to close the distance between their concerns and those of the United States. These new "consensus" ideas presented a narrative of American progress leading toward pluralism, public administration, and the welfare state. The challenge to this non-ideological, consensual position was, for Bell and Lipset, not merely Communism but the Goldwater Right, which questioned the New Deal and the rising pluralist order. Fortunately for the New York intellectuals, American politics veered left after the Eisenhower years, so that the national experience

conveniently intersected with the course they wished to see in the American experiment. It would, of course, be inadequate to tell someone who is measuring the distance between two objects that A is moving toward B without also notifying him that B is moving toward A with equal speed. This kind of comprehensive information, however, is never furnished in conventional accounts of how Jumonville's second and third cohorts became absorbed into the American Right and eventually became its most influential voice. What happened is less that these generations steered toward the Right than that those who accepted them as leaders of the American conservative movement shifted leftward with society as a whole. In the upshot, those who had once defined themselves as the anticommunist Left suddenly appeared to belong to the Right. Advocates of a large centralized welfare state with strong Zionist sympathies were embraced as natural allies of the Right, to the extent they opposed the moral revolution of the 1960s counterculture and favored a strong defensive posture vis-à-vis the Soviets.

An exaggerated emphasis on a neo-conservative march toward the Right also diverts attention from certain other significant facts. Jumonville's anthology includes essays by Kristol and Podhoretz, published in the 1950s and 1960s, about McCarthyism and racial minorities that are far more reactionary than anything the authors would have published in the 1980s. Moreover, the first of the generations also seemed the least encumbered by Jewish parochialism. Despite their estrangement from gentile America, Jumonville's first cohort sometimes showed remarkable enthusiasm for made-in-America cultural products. One would be hard pressed today to find in *Commentary* the appreciations of Southern literature that were once taken for granted in *PR*. ■

*Paul Gottfried is Raffensperger Professor of Humanities at Elizabethtown College and the author of Conservatism in America: Making Sense of the American Right.*

# The Geek Shall Inherit

The United States remains the world's technological leader—for now. Various factors probably contribute, from the entrepreneurial spirit to a certain maverick

attitude: "Who says I can't do that? Watch me." The crucial element, however, has to be trained brains. People of almost unimaginable intelligence invent science, the merely brilliant turn it into useful things, and the rest of us buy it. Where do our phenomenally smart people come from?

Harvard is perhaps the country's pre-eminent university. The best figures I can find are that the average IQ at Harvard is 130, which is the entry level for Mensa, the high-IQ society; 17 percent of the students are said to be National Merit Finalists. That's bright.

There is a brutally difficult math course at Harvard, Math 55, regarded as the hardest at the school and probably in the country. A recent article in the Harvard *Crimson*, the student newspaper, noted, "The final course drop forms are dutifully submitted. The class roster: 45 percent Jewish, 18 percent Asian, 100 percent male."

That Jews are bright is perhaps not breaking news. "Asian" is vague, being a geographical rather than an ethnic or genetic category. Still, if you take Jews as 2 percent of the population, and Asians as 6, you have 8 percent of the population producing 63 percent of the class. Since they were all male, the 8 percent becomes 4 percent. It being unlikely that Harvard has some secret means of discriminating against utility whites, Christians, or females, it follows that the students are there on their merits.

If the foregoing were a fluke, we might ignore it. But it isn't. A friend, writ-

ing a book about Harvard, puts the studentry at roughly a quarter Jewish and a quarter Asian—half the school from 8 percent of the population. At the University of California at Berkeley, the flagship of California's state universities, so many Asians gained entry that whites wanted a protective quota.

In my guise as technology writer for the *Washington Times*, I have often read the staff lists at high-end research facilities, for example Bell Labs. The numbers vary. Sometimes Asians predominate. More women appear in the life sciences. Schools of lower rank look more like America. At the top, it's Math 55.

Now, if 1 percent of the population—Jewish males—produce 45 percent of Math 55, one might reasonably conclude that ability is not evenly distributed through the population and that certain groups carry much more than their weight in maintaining the country's competitive position. Wisdom might suggest staying out of their way and letting them do it.

It is not acceptable, however, to say that smarter people are smarter and even less acceptable to suggest that the differences may be genetic. The notion arouses endless political furor, but has a depressing way of fitting the facts. Among people engaged in mental testing, it is well known that at the extreme levels of ability, mathematics is a man's game.

Discrimination is a poor explanation. College-track students in high school take very much the same

courses. College students can major in anything they choose. Environment? Karl Friedrich Gauss, widely regarded as one of the world's three greatest mathematicians, grew up in a family of German peasants. So did tens of thousands of other children. On the environmental theory, all of them should be among the world's three greatest mathematicians. If I had grown up in Michael Jordan's family, presumably I would have an intercontinental jump shot.

Feminists, of course, see the dominance of males in the field as a consequence of prejudice. To remedy this presumed injustice, we now see attempts to apply the "gender equity" provisions of Title IX of the Education Act to education in the sciences. Although the argument tends to be stated as seeking equality of opportunity, anything short of statistical proportionality will be seen as evidence of discrimination. It always happens. Women are 51 percent of the population, and therefore should be 51 percent of mathematicians and, one might argue, weightlifters and NASCAR drivers.

The same reasoning suggests of course that we should reduce the Jewish presence in the sciences to 2 percent and get rid of most of the Asians. And, since women earn more Ph.D.'s than men, we should reduce their numbers to 51 percent. Any takers?

The sciences are the basis of America's position in the world. We can't play games with them. Classes to which students are admitted by measures other than ability inevitably will be watered down. Politically appointed professors will inevitably teach at a lower level than those chosen by ability. It's a road to the Third World. If Math 55 looks like America, America won't. ■

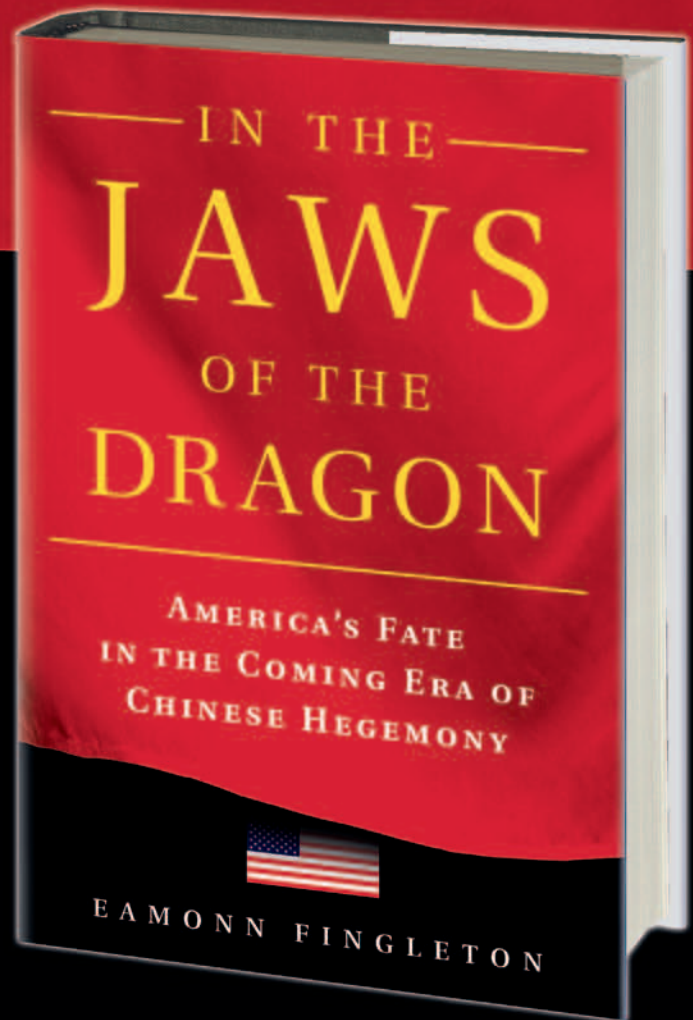


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